

Care nightmare

Carers are being put under unbearable pressure because of a lack of money and support services, new research has shown.

Some have had nervous breakdowns because they were unable to cope with the strain, the Carers National Association (CNA) said.

Its new survey* of 2,000 carers whose family member had been admitted to hospital found 72 per cent of patients were sent home too soon or without a care package in place.

One woman's husband was unconscious when an ambulance took him home. The hospital said they "could not keep him forever," but he was readmitted and died a week later.

Report author Emily Holzhausen said nearly half the carers felt they had not had enough help and their concerns had not been recognised.

She added: "The lack of support and the assumption that the family will do the caring

places enormous pressure on carers."

Lack of support is also felt by parents of disabled children, who struggle with finances, a study** by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation has said.

The research found parents of disabled children spend on average twice as much on their child as parents of non-disabled children, while their income is often below the national average.

Many families do not know which benefits they are entitled to, and even those receiving all the benefits available would still get nearly £30 a week less than they need, report author Barbara Dobson said.

She added: "The difficulty is that carers have other things to worry about, like a lack of practical and emotional support, as well as money."

A study*** by the Alzheimer's Society found lack of time was also an issue for carers.

Forty per cent said they had less than one hour a day to themselves, and three-quarters saw their friends less often than they did before they were carers.

These additional pressures on carers can lead to health problems. CNA research has shown six out of ten carers believed money worries affected their health, and half had been treated for a stress-related disorder.

* You Can Take Him Home Now, free, tel: 020 7490 8818.

**The Impact of Childhood Disability on Family Life, £10.95 plus £2 P&P, tel: 01904 430868.

***Everyday Matters, free, tel: 020 7306 0606.



Wheels of fire: Graham Hicks (left), who is deafblind, has set the first ever quad bike world speed record, driving it at 99.26 miles an hour with the help of stuntman Matt Coulter. He was raising funds for Deafblind UK, tel: 01733 358100.

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IB work interview worries

Charity Scope has voiced concern at plans to make partners of people on Incapacity Benefit (IB) attend work-focused interviews. The move was announced in the Queen's Speech.

Benefits policy officer Mike Hurdiss said: "The notion that tens of thousands of partners are somehow having a free ride is nonsense. This will be perceived as unnecessarily provocative and people will be worried they will be forced into work."

The government also plans to reform IB to get people back into work, and replace Disabled Person's Tax Credit and Working Families Tax Credit with a new tax credit for households on low incomes.

An NHS bill will introduce elected patients' bodies to be involved in local care decisions.

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Parking campaign's first win



Major supermarket chains have agreed to take part in talks about enforcing special parking spaces for disabled people.

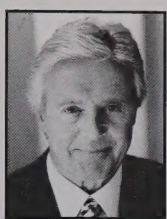
Tesco, Sainsbury, Asda and Sainsbury's have agreed to meet with the British Polio Fellowship (BPF), which joined a new parking campaign group in June.

DN, which is also involved in the Baywatch campaign, is urging its readers to fill in the supermarket parking questionnaire on page 46 to back up its

calls for action. All Baywatch members have now called for a meeting with the stores in September.

The Baywatch group is demanding a crackdown on disabled parking space abuse and blue badge abuse in general.

The news of Baywatch's first success comes as TV celebrity Michael Aspel (left), whose 20-year-old son Patrick has cerebral palsy, announced his backing.



He said: "Days out with my disabled son are regularly spoilt by the selfishness of able-bodied drivers. I'm giving Baywatch campaign my heartfelt support."

An RAC survey recently found that 80 per cent of disabled drivers want fines of up to £1,000 for badge abuse.

Baywatch also involves the Disabled Drivers' Motor Club and the Disabled Drivers' Association.

Andrew Kemp, BPF chief executive, said the four supermarkets had all agreed to talks after a report by the charity

found problems with awareness of enforcement policies among store managers.

Mr Kemp said: "We have got as near as you can get to an admission that things are not right and a commitment to putting things straight."

The Baywatch group is planning a parking award scheme for the best supermarket.

The campaign got off to a good start when 430 people filled in its questionnaire at the Mobility Roadshow at Crowthorne in June.

See Comment, p16.

Blair names new Minister for Disabled People

Prime Minister Tony Blair has appointed former solicitor Maria Eagle as Minister for Disabled People.

Ms Eagle, 40, has been MP for Liverpool Garston since 1997. She has previously been parliamentary private secretary to Health Minister John Hutton.

Ms Eagle told DN: "I look forward to advancing the government's commitment to improving rights for disabled people in this country."

She replaces Margaret Hodge, who is now Minister of State for Lifelong Learning and Higher Education.

FRONT COVER: ANGELA MCCOWAN AT THE BT NATIONAL OPEN SWIMMING CHAMPIONSHIPS, SHEFFIELD, IN JUNE. © GRAHAM BOOL PHOTOGRAPHY

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Published by Scope
Editor Mary Wilkinson

EDITORIAL

News Editor Rod Hermeston
Reporter Emma Hawes
Layout Sub Laura Strong
Editorial/Administrative Assistant Dan Batten
Design/Production Editor Damien Vessey
Scope, 6 Market Road
London N7 9PW
Editorial: 020 7619 7323
Fax: 020 7619 7331
Minicom: 020 7619 7332
E-mail: editor@disabilitynow.org.uk

ADVERTISING

Advertising Manager
Richard Gresham
Tel: 020 7619 7336
E-mail: richard.gresham@scope.org.uk
Sales Executive
Patrick Durham-Matthews
Tel: 020 7619 7320
E-mail: patrick.durhammatthews@scope.org.uk
Sales Administrative Assistant Jennifer Atherton
Fax: 020 7619 7331

MARKETING

Marketing Manager
Judith Reid
Tel: 020 7619 7319
Marketing Executive
Melanie Mangham

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Customer Interface, Bradley Pavilions, Bradley Stoke North, Bristol BS32 0PP
Tel: 01454 642444
E-mail: dns@cisubs.co.uk

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Going green: PC George Thomas handed out awards to a team of disabled gardeners, including Mona Evans, at Lime Court day centre, Liverpool. The gardeners have completed an eight-month course.

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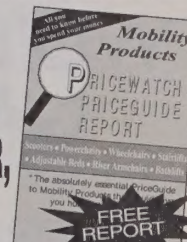
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Treat patients right – Mencap

Doctors should make judgments on treating people with learning disabilities purely on medical grounds, new guidelines by Mencap have said.

And the draft document says they should discuss these decisions with the learning disabled patient in their preferred method of communication.

The guidelines came after a Mencap study showed doctors withhold treatment from learning disabled people because they think they cannot have a high quality of life.

Other research by the charity found that only half of 1,066 members of the public surveyed thought people with a learning

disability should be able to make important decisions about their own lives.

Richard Kramer, head of campaigns at Mencap, said: "Learning disabled people should have the same rights to make their own choices as non-disabled people."

Mencap intends to publish final guidance on treatment decisions in September.

- A Mencap probe into benefits found that, on average, families with a learning disabled member were missing out on up to £3,000 worth of benefits each year because of bad advice by benefits staff.

Mencap, tel: 020 7454 0454.

Few get benefit of specialist stroke units

Over two-thirds of people having strokes are treated in general hospital wards despite evidence that treatment in specialist stroke units reduces death and disability by 25 per cent, a report has found.

Stroke is the UK's main cause of severe disability. But the report, *Speaking Out About Stroke**, found only 50 per cent of people are looked after by staff with specialist knowledge.

The study was carried out for the Stroke Association and was based on a survey of 2,252 patients and carers.

- A survey has found half of all deafblind people have been given operations or other medical treatments that were not explained to them. *Who Cares?**** by the charities Deafblind UK and Sense is based on responses from 382 deafblind people.

*Free, tel: 0845 303 3100.

**Free, tel: 020 7272 7774.

Blindness 'need not stand in way' of magistrate work

Blind people are to be allowed to sit as magistrates following the success of a pilot scheme.

The Lord Chancellor Lord Irvine announced the decision to allow visually impaired people to sit as lay magistrates in June. It follows assessments of nine blind and visually impaired people who had been sitting as magistrates in the pilot which began in 1998.

Lord Irvine said: "They have demonstrated that it is the abilities of magistrates that count and that their disability need not stand in the way of serving the community in the important judicial role of the magistrate."



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New Deal to go national in July

A £40m-a-year government scheme aimed at helping 90,000 disabled people find work will go national in July.

The New Deal for Disabled People will help those on incapacity benefits find jobs.

But DN has learned that a special research unit was told not to bid to evaluate the success of the scheme because it disagreed with the tests being used.

Disability groups are angry that from January 2002 the government will bar 20 per cent of would-be participants from the scheme for a year to check that those getting help do fare better (DN, May).

The Rehabilitation Resource Centre at City University, London, was told it would not be asked to bid because of its reservations about this control group.

DRC case concern

Disability rights campaigners are disappointed that the Disability Rights Commission (DRC) is not to take up more legal cases.

The DRC said in its Strategic Plan 2001-2004 that it will use its £11m annual budget to take up 75 new legal cases a year on behalf of people who have been discriminated against.

David Ruebain, vice chair of umbrella campaigning group Rights Now, said: "Ideally we would like it to fight more than that, but that is a feature of its

budget which many of us are very disappointed about."

Bob Niven, DRC chief executive, said it was focusing on test cases which clarify areas of uncertainty under the DDA and high-profile cases which would influence society.

He said: "This is an ambitious plan. Many commentators have already said this to us."

The DRC also aims to:

- Respond to at least 50,000 calls a year to its helpline.
- Establish good practice partnerships in retail, health, local

government, education, broadcasting, transport and financial services.

- Complete a review of current laws affecting disabled people by 2002.

- Complete at least one major investigation.

- Develop codes of practice relating to the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act by 2002.

- Obtain government commitment to bring transport within the goods and services provision of the DDA.



Hands on: Rebecca Harris, 23, who is blind, has just graduated from the University of Hertfordshire with a degree in fine art. Her end-of-year exhibition created a room with fleece-lined walls and stuffed shapes. Rebecca uses touch and sound to engage the audience in her work.

In brief

Ethnic discrimination

Disabled people from ethnic groups are discriminated against by service providers, a new Scope report* says.

The charity recommends that services should use community outreach workers to help ethnic groups, consult with users and create a pool of interpreters for people who do not have English as their first language.

*Ethnicity and Disability, £10, tel: 0870 012 0700.

Employer advice

The Employers' Forum on Disability is publishing a series of 25 guides* on employing disabled people over the next year, with the support of income protection insurer Unum.

As part of its New Beginnings campaign, Unum is calling on industry, the government and the voluntary sector to improve job opportunities for disabled people.

*Tel: 020 7403 3020.

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Six-year wait

A man with multiple sclerosis has had to sleep in an armchair and use a bucket as a toilet for six years, because of a series of errors by his local council.

Wheelchair user John Simpson needs an extension built on his house. But he has seen three occupational therapists because two left their jobs, the council has lost his records, an architect designing his extension also left, and the council has changed its mind twice about the design before finally approving it.

And he still doesn't have a date for when it will be built.

Mr Simpson told *DN*: "I really was getting depressed and was desperate. I feel that I

have been really let down."

He added that he no longer invited friends to visit him because he was embarrassed about having to ask them to leave the room when he needed to go to the toilet.

A spokesman for Surrey County Council said they "deeply regretted" the delays, which were the result of a "most unfortunate combination of circumstances."

He added: "We have revised our systems to improve regular liaison between parties."

A spokesman for the MS Society said: "It seems unbelievable that this unacceptable situation could have been allowed to run on for so long without being resolved."



Chef's special: Food guru Prue Leith dished up a treat with severely disabled children at the launch of a new food technology room at the Jack Taylor School in London. The room, which was opened in June, will help the school's pupils gain practical life skills.

Queen commends disability work

The Queen's birthday honour list singled out several dozen people for their work in the disability world.

Dela Smith, head teacher at Beaumont Hill Special School, Darlington, was made a Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire.

Professor Mark Haggard and Philippa Russell, director of the Council for Disabled Children, were awarded CBEs for hearing research and ser-

vices to disabled children and adults respectively.

OBEs went to Malcolm Clark, former director of Queen Elizabeth's Foundation for Disabled People; Rodney Clark, formerly chief executive of deafblind charity Sense; John Evans, founder of the Hampshire Centre for Independent Living; Thomas Freeman, former chief executive of the Horizon NHS Trust, Hertfordshire; Phil Friend,

equal opportunities and disability consultant; and Eric Taylor, chairman of Rehab Scotland.

MBEs included Ann Storrs Barlow, for services to the community, especially Riding for the Disabled, in Abingdon, Oxfordshire; Anthony Blunt, director general of Hearing Dogs for Deaf People; sign language interpreter Wendy Ebsworth; Raymond Heppell, for services to people with



autism in Cambridgeshire; and Basil Jones (above), a BSM driving instructor, for services to mobility for disabled people.

Report issues warning on epilepsy drugs

Women with epilepsy are now being warned their baby could be born disabled if they take certain treatments during pregnancy, a new report has found.

The report, by *Health Which?*, found that side effects were often not included in information leaflets given out with medicines.

Yet the Medicines Control Agency is aware of 400 children born with disabilities such as spina bifida due to the drug valproate, and more than 200 as a result of the drugs phenytoin and carbamazepine.

A spokesman for the British Epilepsy Association said women with epilepsy who were considering getting pregnant should have counselling to discuss their medication.

Scope comes to decision on adult services

Scope has announced plans to continue services for adults living in the community, after anger at proposals to axe them.

The disability charity had intended to concentrate fieldwork services on children with cerebral palsy (CP), in plans announced last year. But it then consulted with staff and members to find other solutions.

From August eight new community teams will be set up in England and Wales. These will include community support workers for children with CP and their families, and disabled adults in the community.

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In brief

Numeracy success

About three-quarters of special schools have been successful in adopting the National Numeracy Strategy, according to a new OFSTED report*.

The report, which looked at 42 schools, found teaching was weakest in schools with a wide range of abilities and ages.

*www.ofsted.gov.uk

Fighting prejudice

Research by gay and lesbian charity Stonewall has found that only 2 per cent of people admit to holding less positive attitudes towards disabled people.

But the charity is using £900,000 to fund projects where minority groups, such as disability and gay organisations, work together to fight prejudice.

Tel: 020 7881 9440.

On course

The University of Surrey Roehampton is offering a new postgraduate programme on working in the voluntary sector. Courses begin in September.

Tel: 020 8392 3232.

See page 21.

£50,000 of cannabis seized in the capital



A health food shop owner has been arrested after police found cannabis worth £50,000 at his shop.

Metropolitan police arrested Tony Taylor, of Tony's Hemp Shop, Caledonian Road, London, on 21 June. A spokesman said they recovered cannabis and 40 cannabis plants from the address.

Mr Taylor had previously claimed he provided cannabis for therapeutic use. He was bailed to reappear at Islington police station in early August.

• The Metropolitan Police are

piloting a scheme in Lambeth borough of formally warning people found possessing cannabis instead of charging them. If successful it will be introduced across London.

The move comes as Jerry Ham, of London, launches a challenge under the Human Rights Act against his prosecution for possession of cannabis.

Meanwhile, drugs company GW Pharmaceuticals, which is trialling cannabis extracts on disabled people, is due to float on the stock market at £175m. It plans to use the £25m it raises to fund expanded trials.

Energy firm rapped

A disabled woman has won compensation from a gas and electricity company which insisted she was not capable of signing a contract.

Valerie Dexter, from Bedfordshire, who has a neurological impairment, had decided to change her supplier.

But a sales rep from the company npower asked a neighbour to countersign the contract without her knowl-

edge, after she had signed it.

Ms Dexter, who was backed by the Disability Rights Commission (DRC) and manages all her own financial affairs, won £850 from npower at Swindon County Court.

Bert Massie, chairman of the DRC, said: "Businesses need to realise that it is wrong to make sweeping judgements about who is or is not capable of managing their affairs."



In brief

BCODP boss

The British Council of Disabled People (BCODP) has appointed Andy Rickell as its new chief executive.

Mr Rickell, 38, who has cerebral palsy, will take up his post in August. He is currently project coordinator at Disability Action Cheltenham. He replaces Richard Wood, who left BCODP last year.

Police – have your say

Disabled people have an opportunity to give their views on how the police should be trained on disability issues, as part of a consultation by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC).

To take part in the consultation, send your comments to Chief Inspector Kevin Bowsher, HMIC, White Rose Court, Oriental Road, Woking, Surrey, GU22 7LG, or e-mail: kevin.bowsher@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk

Theatre let-down

Disability arts groups have accused the National Lottery of ignoring disability and "defying funding logic" after the Arts Council rejected a bid to build a £6m fully accessible theatre.

It would have been a permanent home for the Graeae Theatre Company, Europe's leading disability theatre group.

The bid was made by Oval House, a London theatre which hosts productions by disabled people. Director Deborah Bestwick said the Arts Council had offered Graeae an 86 per cent rise in funding, but that

without a new building at Oval House, the company had nowhere to stage its productions.

She added: "One of the priorities for expenditure of Lottery money should have been to help people meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act."

"It's outrageous to use terms like cultural diversity and then not include disability."

An Arts Council spokesman said this round of funding was targeted at schemes that would benefit ethnic groups.

"We are not deliberately ignoring anyone, but with

limited funds available difficult decisions had to be made," he added.

Meanwhile, the Lottery's Community Fund, which backs charities, has begun consultation on what types of groups are most in need of its funding in the next five years.

The fund recently gave £62,195 to Glasgow University researchers to study the best way to ensure children with conditions like cerebral palsy and neuromuscular problems are given good nutrition, as part of a new scheme to fund social and medical research.



Hot shot: Visually impaired archer Dennis Crouch (left) from St Dunstan's Archery Club was given sightings by John Grout (right) of the Army Archery Association in the annual competition between St Dunstan's and the Combined Services. The event was held in Sandhurst.

CHRIS FLETCHER

Holiday sector faces shake-up

Disability holiday provider Winged Fellowship Trust (WFT) looks set to take over a holiday charity for blind people as part of plans to provide 11,000 holidays a year.

WFT, which provides around 7,000 supported holidays a year at the moment, was expected to announce the takeover of the Guide Dogs for the Blind holiday scheme as DN went to press. Guide Dog Holiday Service provides 1,000 holidays a year but faced a deficit of £500,000.

Pat Wallace, WFT chief executive, said: "We need to expand our services from our traditional base into new areas to meet the growing expectations of a wide variety of disabled people."

WFT has also announced it will take over running the adventure holiday and training centre Churchtown Farm in Llanlivery, Cornwall. The centre was previously run by Scope.

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Refugees' needs are overlooked

The needs of disabled asylum seekers and refugees are ignored, a new report* has found.

Government advice to agencies assumes they are non-disabled, and the problem is made worse because there are no official figures on how many asylum seekers have a disability.

Report co-author Dr Keri Roberts said: "This group of potentially vulnerable people are simply being ignored and not getting what they are entitled to."

A spokesman for Refugee Action agreed there was a problem. He said refugees and asylum seekers were relocated to emergency accommodation in places like Liverpool without any regard to their disability and how they would get back to London for interviews.

**Disabled Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Britain: Numbers and Characteristics, some available free, tel: 01904 433608.*

In brief

Making sense

Sense, the UK's leading charity for deafblind people, has appointed Dr Tony Best as its new chief executive.

Dr Best was previously head teacher of a residential special school run by the Royal National Institute for the Blind and has many years of experience of working with deafblind people.

He replaces Rodney Clark, who has retired after 20 years with the charity.

Robots in demand

Older people want robots to do cleaning and gardening, and say that good quality home care services should ensure that carers are not changed too often.

The findings come in a report, *Quality at home for older people* that was published by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation: www.jrf.org.uk

New hope for change

People with mental health problems can train for a new career with the help of grants from the charity Mind.

The £1m Real Lives, Real People awards are designed to enable people to learn new skills.

The grants are available until March 2003. Call 020 8215 2286 for details.



Art with heart: Artist David Shepherd met nine-year-old François Ben Hamou at the Young Pavement Artists Competition which raises money to support people with Duchenne muscular dystrophy.

Care services need £700m more to prevent collapse

Care services will need an extra £700m a year to stop the system collapsing, an inquiry has said.

The lack of proper funding means disabled people are being given care by people who do not have relevant qualifications and are "denied power and control over their own lives," researchers from the King's Fund said.

People commissioning care

had "a damaging preoccupation" with keeping costs down instead of improving quality, the report* said.

It calls on the Government to take immediate action and double the funding given to care services to allow standards to be raised.

It recommends that care workers should receive help in gaining more skills, be given better pay, and that service

users should be involved in monitoring and reviewing services.

Julia Unwin, who chaired the inquiry, said: "If we fail to value care workers, we fail to value older and disabled people too. We leave them at risk of avoidable illness, dependency, misery and indignity."

**Future Imperfect?, £14.99, tel: 020 7307 2591, www.kingsfund.org.uk*



Streets ahead: Members of the York Blind and Partially Sighted Society gave their seal of approval to a new tactile model of the city based at York Minster and created by the Dog Rose Trust.

Need for international standards

Disabled people across the world are calling for a United Nations (UN) convention on disability to create a worldwide standard for equality and rights.

The campaign was about to be launched in the UK as *DN* went to press, at a conference to be attended by MEP Richard Howitt, president of the European Parliament's All-Party Disability Group, and Maria Eagle, the new Minister for Disabled People.

Bill Albert, a member of the British Council of Disabled People's International Committee, said: "Disabled people are routinely the most discriminated against throughout the world. It's important to get a body like the UN to take the issue on board and make it quite clear that this is something that shouldn't be happening."

News review

DN rounds up news covered in the mainstream media over the last few weeks

Early diagnosis helps

Diabetes UK warned that two thirds of people with diabetes could be dying from preventable complications because of late diagnosis. The charity said the number of people with the condition was "escalating to epidemic proportions", and would double by 2010. It wants diabetes to be diagnosed sooner, and more specialist health staff employed to support people with the condition.

Father sentenced

James Lawson was given a two-year prison sentence, suspended for two years, for helping his daughter Sarah, who had mental health problems, kill herself. He pleaded guilty to manslaughter on the grounds of diminished responsibility. The case prompted mental health charity Mind to call for a new Mental Health Act giving people a legal right to services.

Alzheimer victory

A woman with Alzheimer's disease won her fight to continue to get treatment free on the NHS after she moved house. Barbara Woodward was told she would have to pay £165 a month for her prescription of Aricept when she moved to Northampton, despite being given it free when she lived in Swindon. Northampton Healthcare Trust changed its rules after she complained.

Increase in care

The Health and Social Care Act, which makes nursing care free for elderly people but not personal care, received Royal Assent in May. The Act also enables local and health authorities to create day care trusts offering both social and health services.

Parental leave

The Government increased the amount of parental leave available to parents of disabled children from 13 to 18 weeks. Also, all parents with children under five are now eligible for such leave. Parents whose child has a disability can take leave up to their child's 18th birthday.



Looks smashing: The stylish three wheel Moti Activ children's wheelchair by JCM Seating Solutions recently underwent crash tests for car use.

Remembering Mary Holland

Ann Hithersay writes: Mary Holland died in May. She came to England from California in the 1970s, following an accident in which she lost an arm. She was involved in a project to improve prosthetic arms, and her dedication to disability rights began.

Mary joined Scope in 1994. She became involved in research into cerebral palsy and Scope's Save a Baby Campaign.

In 1982 Mary became head of parliamentary affairs and campaigns at Mencap. She chaired the Act Now campaign which implemented the Disabled Persons Act 1986 and was a founder member of the pioneering Advocacy Alliance, which worked to provide advocates for patients in "long-stay mental handicap hospitals." She joined the disability charity RADAR in 1991 as an assistant director.

Having championed the cause of disabled people for almost 30 years, Mary will be greatly missed.

More support needed for children

Primary schools should do more to support pupils with mental health problems, the Mental Health Foundation has said.

In a new report*, it calls for mental health co-ordinators in all schools, continuing teacher training, and for OFSTED inspections to look at children's emotional development.

*I want to be your friend but I don't know how £12.50, teachers' pack £25, both plus p&p, tel: 020 7535 7441.

Send news stories to Disability Now, fax: 020 7619 1331, e-mail: editor@disabilitynow.org.uk

Pioneering rail probe spots faults

Severe shortages of seating in railway stations and poor station announcements are among problems highlighted in the first ever survey of disabled rail users in the UK.

The survey *Easing the Trip**, carried out for the London Transport Users Committee (LTUC), reports the views of disabled person's railcard hold-

ers in the capital, but many findings would apply across the country. There were 119 survey responses, while 27 people took part in focus groups. Across the UK there are 54,000 card holders.

Ten mobility impaired passengers emphasized that stations lacked adequate seating, while ten people with sensory

impairments said that announcements of train departures or changes to services were either not made or were unintelligible.

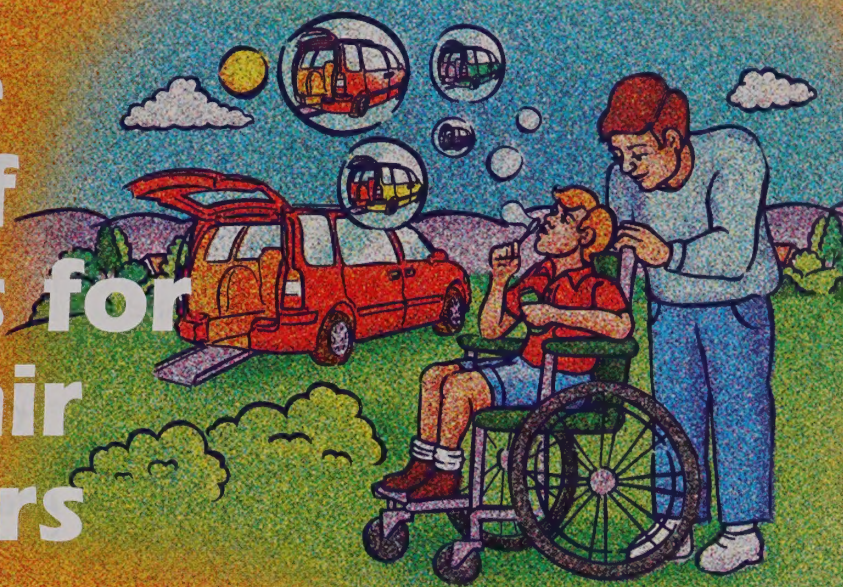
Problems with train design were also highlighted, while three people mentioned that other passengers were unwilling to give up their seats for disabled people.

Suzanne May, chair of LTUC, said: "Public transport should be there for everyone. This report makes clear just how much still needs to be done."

The report says the rail industry should set up a body to review all aspects of rail travel for disabled people.

*Free, tel: 020 7880 6110.

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Phantom pain trial

Phantom pains experienced after amputation can be reduced by teaching the brain that the limb is no longer there, new research has shown.

Scientists at Humboldt University, Berlin, found use of electrodes to stimulate a person's stump for ten 90-minute sessions "significantly reduced" phantom pain, which affects about 80 per cent of people who

have undergone an amputation.

During the sessions, five people were asked to locate the electrodes on their stump and specify the frequency of stimulation. Over a two-week period, their accuracy in locating the electrodes increased. Any phantom pain not connected with the electrodes also lessened.

A control group of five people who did not use the

electrodes still felt the same amount of phantom pain.

Professor Herta Flor, who led the research, said the electrode stimulation rearranged parts of the brain, and the reduction in phantom pain appeared to be permanent.

A Limbless Association spokesman said the study was encouraging, but a larger trial was needed.

High-fat health

A high-fat diet can significantly reduce seizures in children with "difficult to control" epilepsy, a new study has found.

Researchers at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine in America studied 65 children on a ketogenic diet, which is high in fat but low in protein and carbohydrates.

They found the average number of seizures dropped from 25 a day to fewer than two a day for the 34 children who remained on the diet for over a year.

Nearly a third of those did not have any seizures in

the 12 months following the study.

Furthermore, 18 children from the group experienced a 90 per cent drop in the frequency of seizures they had, and were able to reduce their medication.

A spokesperson for the British Epilepsy Association (BEA) said: "Ketogenic diets should only be used under medical supervision.

"Hopefully, a medication could be developed in the future that would simulate the positive effects of the diet." BEA, tel: 0113 210 8800.

In brief

Video fitness

A new fitness video for disabled people, *Mission: Ability*,* has been produced by nutritionist and fitness instructor Susie Cornell.

*£15.95 plus £1.95 P&P, tel: 01245 268098.

Alternative therapy

Yoga can help people with mental health problems, the charity Mind has said. *The Mind Guide to Yoga** outlines different types of yoga and gives details of classes.

*£1 plus 40 pence A4 SAE, tel: 020 8221 9666.



Helping hand: Kirsty White demonstrates a new powered arm support, created by researchers at Cambridge University to help people with muscle-weakening conditions lift and carry objects.

Japanese study shows promise

A combination of drugs and exercise can help children whose hearts have been damaged by the rare disorder Kawasaki Disease (KD), a new study has found. Damage to the heart and arteries occurs in 20 per cent of children with KD, and three per cent die as a result of heart attacks caused by blood clots.

Researchers at Chiba University School of Medicine, Japan, studied six children affected by the condition. They found a combination of anti-clotting drugs and 20 minutes of exercise a day for ten days encouraged new blood vessels to grow, and old blocked ones to widen, allowing more blood to the heart.

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Elderly left waiting

Elderly people in Birmingham are kept in hospital unnecessarily because no one will pay for their care if they are discharged.

At least 230 people were in the city's hospitals without reason at the beginning of June and Birmingham Health Authority (BHA) predicted the figure would be nearer 270 by the start of July.

Care packages for elderly people are paid for by social services, but last July Birmingham

City Council made cuts of £4.6m after overspending. It also slashed the number of support packages available for elderly people leaving hospital from 80 to 37 a month.

Extra cash provided by BHA to avoid a winter crisis ran out in March.

A spokesman for Age Concern said: "Older people should not be left waiting for care they need. A hospital is simply not a suitable place to stay."

Meanwhile, disabled people in Birmingham are fighting to get an Independent Living Centre built in the city.

The Birmingham Freedom Alliance feels local authorities are stalling on the project. They have held a demonstration in a bid to speed up the process, and council leader Albert Bore agreed to meet them to discuss progress. A spokesman for the health authority said they were also keen to work with the Alliance.

Broken lifts cause train trip chaos

A wheelchair user and two disabled children were shut in a guard's van on a journey to London after missing an accessible train because station lifts were broken.

Susie Cornell, who has multiple sclerosis, and Jane Miller and her children, two of whom have cerebral palsy, were unable to get to the platform in time at Chelmsford.

The lifts at Liverpool Street station were not working either and they had to use a dirty service lift.

The train company, First Great Eastern, gave Jane Miller and her family first-class tickets for their return journey.

A spokesman for Railtrack said major work was needed at both stations, causing delays in fixing the lifts. They had now put up a board at Liverpool Street giving information on what to do if the lift was broken.

Cinema drama

A trip to the cinema turned into an embarrassment for a woman and her disabled husband, when staff had to take out seats to make room for his wheelchair.

Barbara and Colin Thwaites went to the newly-opened Ster Century cinema in Romford, Essex, but Mr Thwaite's wheelchair would not fit into the spaces allocated.

"I couldn't turn him round because of the row of chairs in front," Mrs Thwaites said. "Staff had to take out a couple of chairs to make room."

By this time, the film had started and the couple were embarrassed.

"I just couldn't believe it," Mrs Thwaites added. "I couldn't even sit next to my husband and we didn't enjoy the film because of that. I was constantly looking round to make sure he was OK."

A spokesman for Ster Century said the cinema conformed to access laws but added that extra removable seating would be installed to ensure larger wheelchairs could access the auditorium.

In brief

Welsh forum

Disabled people in Carmarthenshire, Wales, are helping to set up a disability forum that will advise local authorities.

A shadow committee of disabled people has been created to draw up the aims and objectives of the forum, which will look at issues such as access, availability of information, transport, housing and benefits.

It is due to hold its first meeting by the middle of July.

Scheme disappoints

Some disabled people in Salford are being failed by the Welfare to Work scheme, the Social Services Inspectorate (SSI) has

said. The SSI found the service provided by Salford Council was inconsistent and not available to everyone. However, some service users were pleased with the attention they were given, the report added.

The council is due to review how well it administers the scheme in 2002.

Alzheimer's aware

Alzheimer Scotland - Action on Dementia has launched a campaign to raise awareness of the condition, which affects 58,000 people in Scotland.

The charity has produced a free leaflet advising people on how to talk to a person with dementia, as well as a guide* to creating dementia-friendly communities.

*£5, freephone: 0808 808 3000.



Big break: Children's BBC presenter Adrian Dickson (centre) launches the Re:d Centre for children and young people with disabilities in Bury. Run by charity NCH (formerly the National Children's Home), the Re:d Centre will offer respite care and play schemes.

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Labour's large majority could make it neglect its disability promises, says Rod Hermeston

Will Labour listen?

As results go it was about as surprising as Man United winning the Premier League.

Labour is back with a hefty 167-seat majority and Tony Blair has brought in Maria Eagle as Minister for Disabled People. Disability groups will be watching her to make sure she and the government deliver on manifesto pledges. Alarm bells rang when Labour was the only major party not to publish a special disability manifesto.

But Labour is promising a lot of new rights based on its response to the Disability Rights Task Force (DRTF) recommendations made in 1999.

Plans will extend the DDA to an extra seven million jobs. For instance, by 2004 the government says it will bring all small employers under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA). Those with fewer than 15 staff are currently exempt.

It will also oblige the public sector to positively promote equal opportunities for disabled people.

And Labour wants to bring HIV and cancer under the DDA from diagnosis.

Meanwhile, the Disability Rights Commission (DRC) is launching a review of legislation.

Bob Niven, DRC chief executive, wants early action from the government but says: "We will almost certainly want the government to go even further



Number ten again: Tony and Cherie Blair at Downing Street

than some of the DRTF recommendations."

This might mean extending the definition of disability further and allowing courts to combat indirect disability discrimination. Such powers within the sex discrimination laws allowed policies on part-time work to be struck down because they unintentionally discriminated against women.

The DRC is also calling on the government to give it the power to take up cases under the Human Rights Act.

The government has big

plans in the area of work.

The New Deal for Disabled People, aimed at helping people on incapacity benefits to find work, goes national in July.

And from 2002 it will allow people on incapacity benefits to earn up to £60.50 a week for a year or £20 a week indefinitely.

But as if benefits were a dirty word, the government has put them within its renamed Department for Work and Pensions, making much of its desire to create an "employment first" society.

DN readers will remember

What we want

Wheelchair user Kay Hitchen, 56, of Anglesey, is angry that the government is to press ahead with charging people for personal care. "Most people my age were under the impression that the government would provide care from the cradle to the grave."

Mark Baggley, 40, manages a disability housing service in Hull. He supports DN's winter fuel campaign. He was pleased Labour created the DRC but feels it needs to "show its teeth." Mark wants the government to build more homes suitable for all.

Frank Adams, 57, of Huddersfield, says "the government that apathy voted in" needs to do much more to recognise the extra cost of disability through the benefits system or tax exemptions. "They need to recognise that many disabled people rely totally on their cars and address the problem of high fuel tax."

the way the government used its last majority to ignore protests against cuts to Incapacity Benefit through the Welfare Reform and Pensions Act.

Niven says: "If there is to be any welfare reform they must make sure that disabled people are not disadvantaged."

Campaigners are concerned about proposals on home care charges, which would let local

are unfair. These are services that disabled people need. They cannot go about their daily lives without them."

The government has yet to unveil its final proposals, but it is refusing to make personal care free to all elderly and disabled people when rules ensuring that nursing care is free come in from October.

The Department of Health has pledged an extra £1bn a year by 2005 to improve services for cancer, heart disease and stroke.

And by 2004 it promises a National Service Framework outlining standards of care for people with multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's disease, epilepsy and spinal injury.

The government has also pledged to cut waiting times for treatment rather than focusing on the number of people on waiting lists. But Tunney warns that it needs to deliver a high quality service not just a fast service, with disability awareness and improved access.

Ministers aim that by 2010 no vulnerable household should risk ill health through cold, mainly via grants to improve home energy efficiency. But many disabled people would like them to bow to DN's warm homes campaign by extending winter fuel payments to severely disabled people under 60 immediately.

Genetics and screening are also an area of concern. Sheila Blair, acting chair of the British Council of Disabled People, says the government must consult with disability groups on this, given that a national prenatal screening programme for Down's syndrome is a manifesto commitment.

Parents must get balanced information rather than doctor just advising abortion, she says.

The government is promising some policies which will benefit disabled people, and campaigners will also be lobbying hard. But with that 167-seat majority will Labour always listen?

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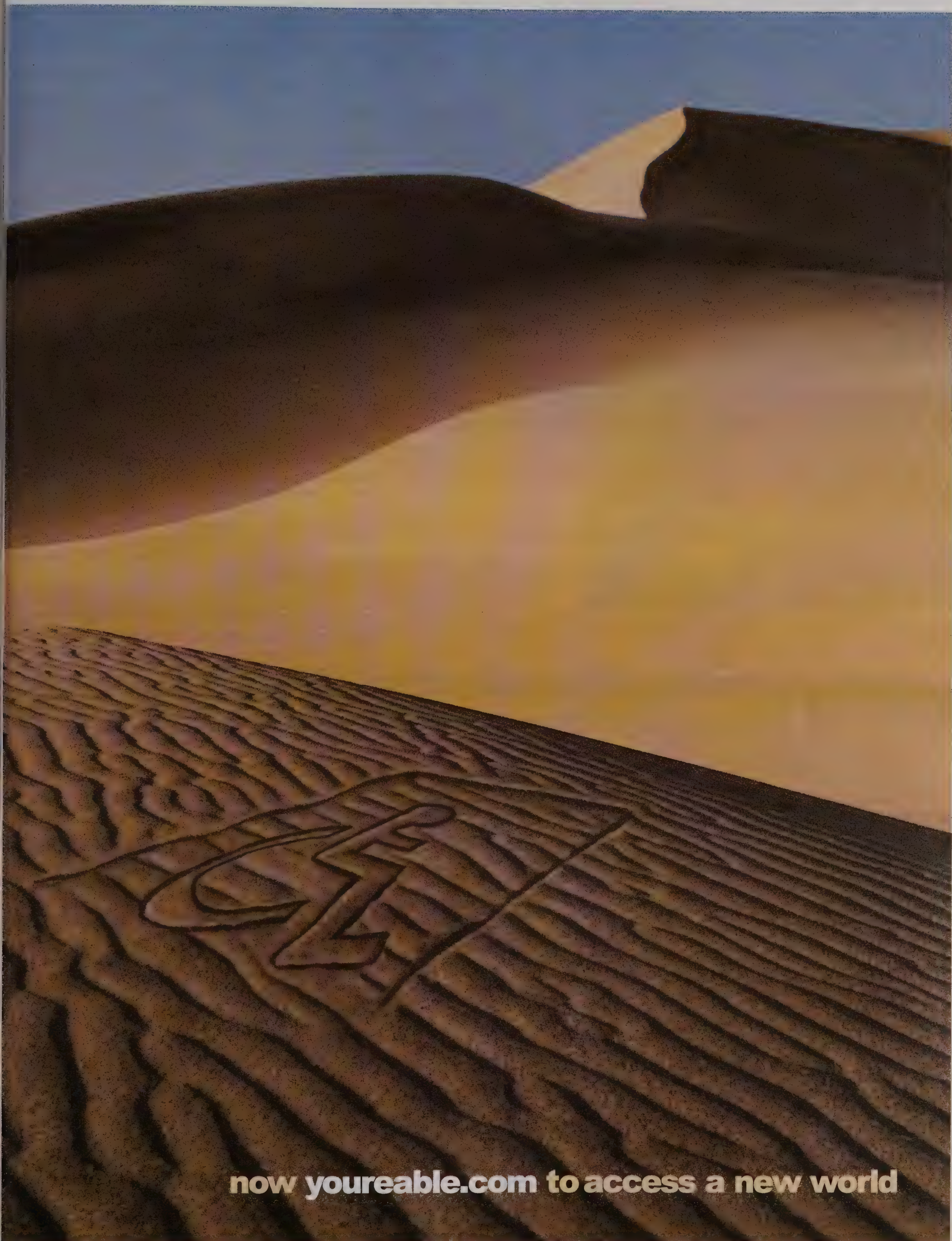
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Swim records smashed

The British Paralympic swimming squad bagged four world records in the BT Five Nations Challenge Trophy in June.

It was clear right from the start of the contest that none of the other teams were going to touch Britain's swimmers,

who retained the title for another year.

Danielle Watts (S1 50m), Sascha Kindred (SM6 200m), David Roberts (S7 100m) and Kenny Cairns (S3 100m) all smashed the existing records in their events, helping to put the

British team a massive 3,000 points ahead of their nearest rival, Poland.

Fellow Brits Chris Pugh and Giles Long set European records in the S14 100m butterfly and SM8 200m individual medley respectively.



Hot shot: Gareth Hudson, who has learning disabilities, puts one in the net to take Surrey's Sunnydown School to victory in the Interoute 2001 Penalty Shoot-Out Championships in May.

Water ski Brits bag 13 medals

The British Disabled Water Ski Association won the 2001 World Championship competition despite losing five of the 11 team members to injury.

The team also set five new world records and took home ten gold medals, two silver and the team gold.

Adeline Fahey was named Water Ski Disabled Champion of the World for the first time, even though she has only been competing for four years.

Team captain Chris Mairs said: "The competition was really tough, but our skiers were superb. The odds were against us, but we pulled through."

Team talk

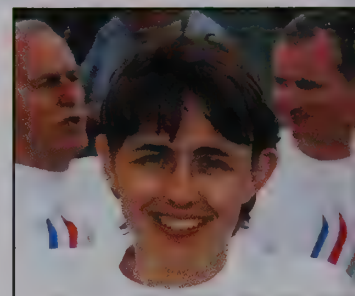
Tanni Grey-Thompson

Sort out this sports ghettoism

The subject of including athletes with learning disabilities (LD) in the Paralympics surfaced again recently. This time it followed on from allegations of cheating amongst the Spanish basketball team in Sydney, and from a wider debate on "classification."

In 1992 LD athletes competed in Madrid while other disability groups competed in Barcelona. At the Atlanta Paralympics there was a limited programme of competition for LD athletes, which was increased in Sydney. Then people started saying the "classification system" was inadequate and many of the LD athletes who competed had insufficient paperwork to support them.

I had mixed feelings. Part of me was excited that people were so keen to join the Paralympics. But I also felt that classification ought to have



been dealt with much earlier.

When asked years ago about LD athletes being at the Games, I was not against the athletes themselves, but like many others I argued that the classification system ought to be tightened up. People retorted that it was OK for "us" as we were "in" and we were trying to exclude "them." We were all disabled so we should be in the Games together, they said.

But surely that is one of the worst forms of sports ghettoism? Of course, there should be opportunities for all disabled athletes to get to the level that suits them best. But at a Paralympic level it is certainly not just about participation of disabled people "having a go."

To be fair to all athletes this needs to be sorted out sooner rather than later – the clock to Athens 2004 is already ticking.

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Firing on all cylinders

As the gleaming Ford Focus screams round the corner into the car park, a grinning elfin-faced teenager behind the wheel, I realise it can only be Gemma Trotter, the 18-year-old hot rod racer I have come to meet.

The Ford might not be her race car, but she certainly drives like a pro on and off the track. She pulls effortlessly out into busy traffic that would have daunted many people.

It seems incredible that today is the fourth anniversary of a car crash that shattered the bones in her left leg, leading to 24 operations and finally the amputation of her leg two years ago.

"I was in Belgium with my mum, my stepdad and my little brother. We went into a lamp post at about 80 miles per hour in a freak accident on the motorway," she says

leg amputated at the thigh.

"I just said to get rid of it," she says. "At first all I could imagine were wooden peg legs, but I knew if I kept my leg it would be shorter than the other one, scarred and painful, and would always cause me trouble."

"I thought 'what's the point of battling with this when I can have something that can be replaced?'"

Gemma is remarkably unemotional when talking about her experiences, and seems surprised when I ask how she was able to get back into a car, let alone race at high speeds, after the crash.

"I have never been scared of cars," she says, "but if the driver is crap then I will want to drive myself."

"I had never been to the track that I first raced at before, and I had no brakes on the car. I went straight into a wall, but I have never felt scared."

She had been interested in rally driving years before the accident, after her dad built her



Girl racer: 18-year-old Gemma at the wheel of her Ford Focus – she drives like a pro on and off the track

system and rear wheel drive so you can get the back end out a bit more."

She is training to be a mechanic, and has had two weeks' work experience with Pro Drive, which prepares all the world rally Subaru Imprezas. She hopes the placement will lead to a job.

She is frighteningly positive about the effect the amputation has had on her life.

"I can't wear short skirts now and I used to," she says. "All the boys look at girls with short skirts, and I don't want

them to see me as different."

Then, before she sounds upset at the constraints on her life, she adds: "I just wear lots of trousers – but I have nice trousers."

Gemma was recently chosen as a judge for the Queen Elizabeth Foundation's EASE awards, which recognise companies that make a positive effort to provide easy access, service and employment for disabled people.

She was delighted to be asked to help with the awards, her first foray into the world of campaigning. "The awards are

great because they raise awareness of disability issues and make organisations work harder on access."

It is a mark of how far Gemma has come in the last few years.

"Four years ago I was in agony and then I got rid of my leg, but it has made no difference to me," she says. "I love what I do and I love being myself. It's a good life."

The EASE awards winners will be announced on 18 October. To sponsor Gemma's racing, tel: 020 8715 7005.

'The amputation has made no difference to me. I love what I do and I love being myself'

matter-of-factly. "All I remember is waking up in intensive care. I was in lots of pain and I couldn't understand what anyone was saying."

She spent the next year in hospital in the UK.

"It was hell," she says. "I had a few friends, but it got really depressing to see them. Then they all abandoned me when the novelty of coming to see someone in hospital wore off."

"I can understand it. They had their boyfriends and things to do."

It is a reply very few adults would feel able to give, and a sign of Gemma's maturity.

After two years of operations, doctors told Gemma the bones would not heal. She got in touch with disability campaigner Heather Mills, who has had a leg amputated. She was a great help to Gemma, who eventually decided to have her

a go-kart, and she always enjoyed watching races. She later joined a rally club and got involved in servicing the cars.

She was able to drive at 16 because she was on the higher rate mobility component of Disability Living Allowance, and when her dad saw her skill at driving her Motability car, he bought her first race car, a Mazda 323.

Gemma now competes against men of all ages. She won six trophies in her first year of racing, came third in her first championship and hopes to compete in three more next year.

You might think she races to prove a point, but her obvious love of cars quickly dispels that suspicion. Ask about her race car and she launches into mechanical descriptions: "It's a super saloon Nissan Micra with a Vauxhall two-litre 16-valve engine, an adaptive clutch



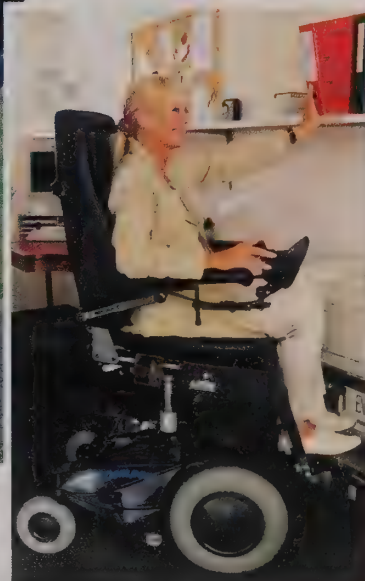
Right on track: Gemma leads in her first race car, a Mazda 323

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DN

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From having to park illegally to facing abusive police, it's no wonder disabled motorists want action against parking abuse



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Jenny Spiers of Dunsfold, Surrey: I know people who use the orange badge of their child who is in residential care and others who use the badge of an elderly parent who is also in care. One solution would be to police badge holders; another, to stop the discrepancy between councils in issuing badges.

I was recently in Florida Keys and found I wasn't disabled at all. Badge holders have masses of clearly marked spaces with plenty of room everywhere you go, and right outside the door. Each space has a \$500 fine for non-badge owners posted – and it really works. If only it were so simple here.

Kate Lister from Newbury has a two-year-old son with cerebral palsy: Last month I questioned a police officer about the regulations on parking in a marked disabled bay. She was abusive and unpleasant as she had parked her car in the bay at the local hospital. I then complained at the local police station, but they weren't interested.

My local B&Q continually has trolleys parked in disabled bays. When I complained to the manager he said not many disabled people visited the store or needed to use the bay. Complaining doesn't seem to get you anywhere.

David Clark from Bransolme, Hull: The disabled parking situation is getting worse.

In my local superstore the parking bays are occupied by taxis, work vans, people using the cash machines next to the parking bays. After my numerous complaints to the management, an employee has been putting a small sticker on the passenger side of the windscreen. I saw the occupants of one car take the sticker off, throw it on the ground, then get into the car laughing. I wonder if they would have been laughing if the car had been clamped.



Tesco listened once: When David and Gwenda Innes of south Wales complained about signs blocking safe access from the disabled parking bays to the footpath, Tesco eventually decided to open more bays in a better part of the car park. "I wasn't prepared to let the issue rest," Mr Innes told DN. Will Tesco and other supermarkets listen again and protect disabled parking bays?

Wendy-Anne Gillies of Eastbourne: Parking here is terrible and getting worse. If you complain you are moaned at or get parking tickets. I have had to park on double yellow lines and in loading bays when delivery vehicles are parked in disabled parking spaces. Parking in supermarket car parks is very bad too. When I complained to my councillors, they laughed and said there was plenty of parking. That was until they tried to park in a disabled parking space. Now they seem to agree there may be a problem.



Derick Bird of Selly Oak, Birmingham: I won a small battle in June when the service delivery manager of the Bartley Green Neighbourhood Office apologised for two staff who parked in disabled bays and didn't remove their cars after I first complained. "A shortage of parking spaces is not a reason to deny access to disabled visitors," he said.

To join the campaign, send contact details and comments to editor@disabilitynow.org.uk, fax: 020 7619 7331. Questionnaires about supermarket parking are available from the British Polio Fellowship, tel: 0800 018 0586, e-mail: info@britishpolio.org

Laurie Richards of Anstruther, Fife: Earlier this year, I was in St Andrews, Fife, and found two of the only three town centre parking spaces occupied by builders' vehicles, not unloading, just parked.

In the absence of traffic wardens I went to the police station to complain, only to be told that with an orange badge I could park anywhere.

I pointed out that the builders could park anywhere – I would like to park in the specially provided, centrally located places.

As usual, I was treated like some sort of trouble-maker.

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Joyce Bartlett of Markfield, Leicester: Just lately, orange badge misuse has

been getting a lot worse. I am usually a calm person, but last week two of the vehicles parked in disabled parking spaces at our local hospital had no orange badge and I was so angry I left notes on the wipers – very polite notes. I am a powerchair user so I need the spaces. I have seen large vans full of work tools displaying orange badges. Does anyone check them out?



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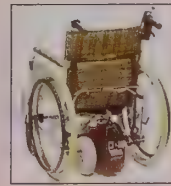
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The Roadshow races on

DN motoring correspondent Douglas Campbell spent a full three days at this year's Mobility Roadshow – and found even that wasn't enough

It was a great Mobility Roadshow at Crowthorne this year despite several heavy downpours on Friday, regular showers on Saturday and a cold wind on Sunday.

The crowds flooded in, the car parks filled up and the hard-working team of drivers

'The crowds flooded in and the car parks filled up. Over 25,000 people visited in just three days'

from Gowrings Mobility shuttled people from the remoter parking areas. Over 25,000 people visited in just three days.

Like many visitors, I headed straight to the food court for my late breakfast of a superb hot bacon baguette and a mug of steaming tea. Looking at the visitors' guide I tried to decide where to start. Clearly there was going to be too much to see in a single day. In fact I failed to get round all of the show even in three days.

First stop was the stand of Coventry-based Jim Doran Hand Controls (tel: 024 7646 0833), where I saw their amazing **tiller control system** that completely replaces the steering wheel. They have fitted over 20 of these to Nissan Micras for people driving an invalid tricycle. Then Jim Doran showed me some even more amazing work they have done on a Mercedes Vito to enable a driver to steer, brake and accelerate with tiny movements of the wrist and hand. As skilled engineers they design these special conversions themselves. Is there any problem they could not solve?

On to the Renault stand (tel: 0800 387626) for my first sight of the **Baboulin Duo Voyageur Concept**. This French unit allows an occupied manual or electric wheelchair to be loaded into the front of the Renault Kangoo without the user having to leave their wheelchair. While this type of product has been around for many years, Baboulin tell me that this is the first system to be fully crash



Focused: Richard Francis tries a Ford Focus automatic, which may soon be a cheaper Motability option

tested. The Kangoo is rather good for this as it has a high roof, making access easier.

Then it was on to the Constables stand (tel: 01323 767574) to look at the **Carchair** system. This long-established device also enables an occupied wheelchair to be loaded into the front seat space. Fitted on a Peugeot 806, the demonstration model worked really well and had lots of space for head and feet.

On the Autochair stand (tel: 0800 214045) Matt Walker was demonstrating the **Monotrail**. Designed to carry a scooter or similar mobility aid, this platform fixes on to a modified towing bracket. Unlike similar products, the Monotrail has a rear caster to allow greater weight limits, without the manoeuvring problems of a trailer. Prices start at £945.

I had to have a look at the **Suzuki Life** on the Jubilee Automotive Group stand (around £20,000, tel: 0121 502 2252). I was just one of many to flood the stand with enquiries for this excellent-

patio. It reminded me of those children's plastic building blocks that lock together.

I called in on Trevor Palmer at the Globaleather stand (tel: 01633 216160). Trevor, a wheelchair user, had sore hands after the 1999 Roadshow and went away to design a proper **glove for pushing a wheelchair**. The gloves, which cost £18.75, proved so popular that extra stocks had to be rushed to the stand. I have bought a pair and will let you know how they work for me.

Sunrise Medical (tel: 01384 446688) was showing the new Breezy 200 wheelchair, which

'Trevor Palmer has designed a proper glove for pushing a wheelchair. The product proved so popular that extra stocks had to be rushed to the stand'



Smooth operation: Rod Sheppard demonstrates Constables' Carchair system on a Peugeot 806

looking little car that allows you to drive from your wheelchair. (See DN, June.)

In the massive marquee I spied the stand of Mobility World (tel: 0870 740 7782), which was showing a modular plastic ramping system that allows quick, easy assembly of ramps to fit almost any situation from a simple threshold in a doorway to a serious step down on to the

will retail at £275. This model is aimed at the health authority market and private buyers wanting a basic wheelchair. Not only is it smart, but the finish is also designed to cope with everyday knocks and bumps. Sunrise had a wealth of wheelchairs and scooters on their stand, including the Quickie range that I use myself.

Just down the aisle was GBL Wheelchair Services (tel: 020



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Easy access: Douglas tries out Mobility World's modular ramp

8569 8955). This Brentford-based company supplies a wide range of wheelchairs and scooters and is often recommended by existing customers for their friendly and professional advice. As always, they were willing to do repairs for visitors to the stand and I saw at least one person getting their batteries topped up.

This was only a fraction of what I saw at the show. Gerald Simonds Healthcare was also there with a range of wheelchairs and expert advice, along with GPSP which offers a wide range of signs and stickers and BadgeGuard with its lovely leather parking badge wallets. There were holiday and travel

firms, and hundreds of cars to test-drive.

The Roadshow was also an opportunity to offer information and launch a new campaign. The Disabled Drivers' Association (DDA) (tel: 0870 770 3333) and the Disabled Drivers' Motor Club (DDMC) (tel: 01832 734724) had teamed up to produce a daily newsletter for the Roadshow. A major story in the Saturday edition was Customs and Excise publication of guidance on new VAT relief on cars bought by wheelchair users. The DDA and DDMC are promising a full information leaflet shortly. One visitor told me that he was



Golden girl: children show off their wheelchair skills to Paralympic athlete Tanni Grey-Thompson

about to save £5,000 VAT on his new car, while another expected a saving of £4,500.

The Baywatch campaign to stop misuse and abuse of disabled parking bays was prominent on the stands of the British Polio Fellowship, DDA and DDMC, as well as on our own DN stand. Many hundreds of visitors completed the parking questionnaire and you will be updated shortly.

If you missed this year's Roadshow, put the 2002 dates in your diary now. It will be at Donington Park in Derbyshire, 20-22 June. For the first time it runs from Thursday to Saturday and will not be open on the Sunday.

For information about next year's Mobility Roadshow, watch out at www.justmobility.co.uk/roadshow For details of Baywatch or to pass on parking comments, fax: 020 7619 7331, e-mail: editor@disabilitynow.org.uk

Newsflash!

Ford to cut Focus automatic price for Motability

Ford has told DN it plans to reduce prices on the popular Ford Focus automatic (right) for Motability customers.

Subject to final approval, the deposit on the Ford Focus automatic three-door will be just £250, with the five-door just £350. These represent price reductions of around £300.

The new prices will make the Ford Focus one of the best-priced automatics in the Motability range for people who find smaller cars unsuitable. Tel: 0800 240241.



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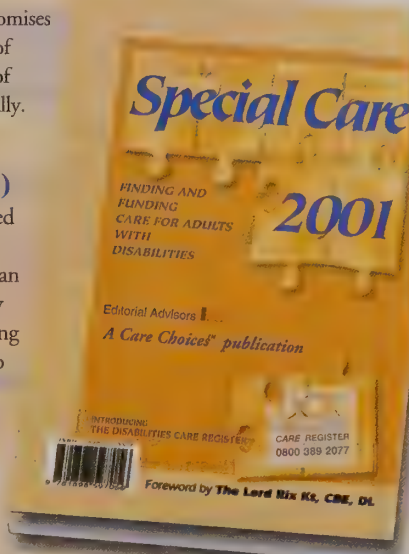
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Tried and tested: Sean Bury helps Emily Shields check out the Voyageur chair in a Renault Kangoo

Colin Low's claim that 'disability is not just a rights issue' (*DN*, May) met with a mixture of raised hackles and applause from disability campaigners. *DN* asks for comments from both sides of the fence

Get real on rights Talking sense on the social model

How can Colin Low reconcile his claim that disability rights have gone too far with his position at the DRC, asks Rachel Hurst



The misconceptions in Colin Low's article seriously undermine and insult the reality of disabled people's lives.

Mr Low says: "As well as the rights-based approach, we need measures aimed at bringing about more structural change" – but that is exactly what rights do. Rights ensure that measures are appropriate, accessible and provide equality of opportunity. If you do not have rights-based services – and benefits – you have the traditional systems of confining people to institutions, to keeping them isolated in their homes in inaccessible housing etc.

He says: "The values of care and support for the vulnerable should not be lost amid the

clamour for rights." And yet it is the rights enshrined in the International Conventions and in the UK Human Rights Act that ensure those values of care and support as a matter of right. If care and support are provided without being based on rights, they patronise and exclude both the disabled person and the "carer."

Mr Low believes one of the factors that distinguishes disability discrimination from

disability is not a clear-cut cause of discrimination but is a continuum that requires judgements "between having [a disability] or not having it." But we do not "have" disability. Disability arises from the response of society to a person with an impairment; it is not a description of a personal characteristic. Disabled people form a distinct minority who face serious disadvantage in a society built for others. To

'This man, who claims disability rights have gone too far, is supposed to be upholding rights for the millions of disabled people who live in poverty, facing discrimination on a daily basis'

other discriminations such as race and gender is the need for reasonable adjustments in order to allow us access to employment and services. What about crèche facilities for women? What about ensuring that community services are appropriate for ethnic minorities? Are these not reasonable adjustments?

He also believes that

pretend otherwise is disablist, as it would be sexist to suggest that women do not face serious disadvantage in a society built by and for men.

So what is Mr Low trying to say? If you have the stamina to read his full lecture, I do not believe you will be further enlightened. However, like me, you may be very shocked to find that he is a commissioner on the Disability Rights Commission (DRC).

This man, who claims that disability rights have gone too far, is supposed to be upholding rights for the millions of disabled people who live in poverty, without proper access to their communities, facing discrimination on a daily basis. This man argues that disability rights may have gone too far! The reality is that they have not gone anything like far enough.

Mr Low's attitude, although not upheld by the DRC, taints the whole commission. If he was a member of a political party and showed as little commitment to the objectives of that party, his resignation would be called for.

If Mr Low does not support the DRC's philosophy, he should resign. For the DRC to allow him to stay is treating disabled people's rights with contempt and, by definition, treating disabled people with contempt.

Rachel Hurst is chair of Rights Now.

Colin Low's criticism of the social model is long overdue, says Michael Morgan



By now I think everyone will have heard about Colin Low's full-blooded assault on that holy of holies of the disability movement – the social model of disability and the disability rights culture it espouses.

Rumour has it that vast funeral pyres are being built by social model supporters up and down the country on which to burn effigies of Mr Low, but this is probably just rumour. There can be no doubt, however, as to the vitriolic

'There is, of course, a social dimension to disability, but there is also a medical, psychological and sexual dimension'

response of some disability researchers on the internet whose comments are too libelous to repeat here.

The article that appeared in *DN* was a shortened piece from his original lecture and, like many an excerpted piece, could be taken up wrongly. To understand the arguments fully I think you need to read his full lecture.

It's a lengthy piece, which calls for close reading, but it's well worth the effort to do this. Some may think Mr Low is denying the existence of discrimination against disabled people or the necessity to combat it through legislation. Neither is true. What Mr Low

is saying is that any analysis of disability which focuses exclusively on discrimination *per se* misses the big picture of disability discrimination and disadvantage. Reality is complex.

This is the most closely argued riposte to the disability movement for many years, and it makes no apologies for homing in on their "big idea" – the social model.

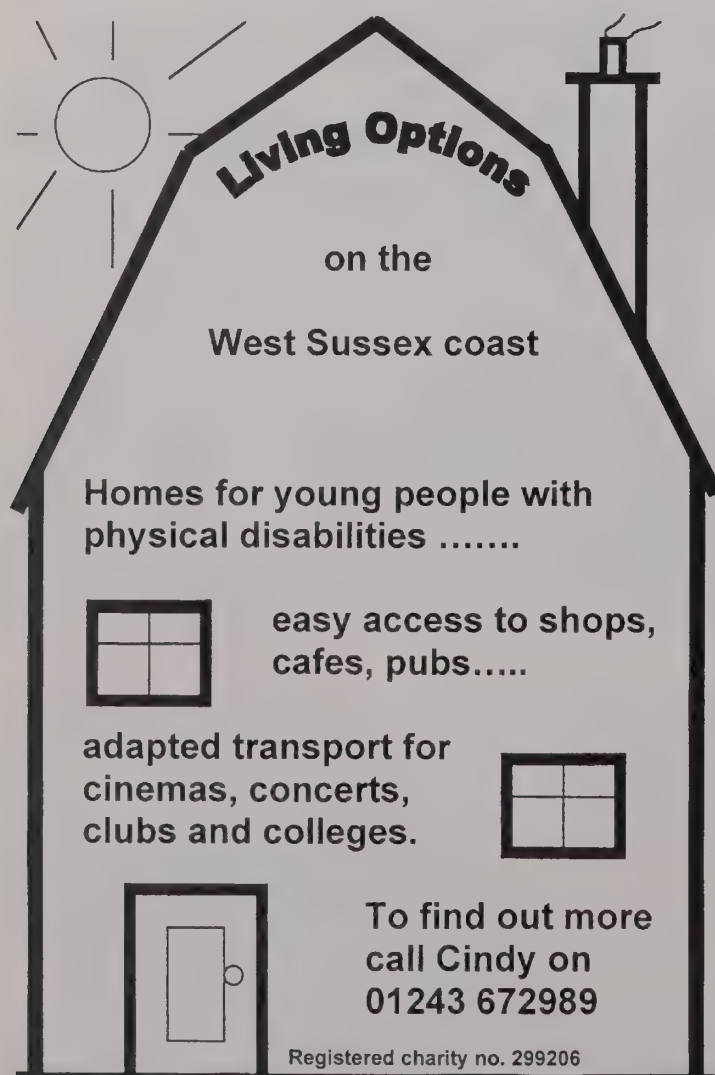
Mr Low effectively deconstructs the social model and exposes its weaknesses. The model's chief fault is that it denies any medical side to disability whatsoever and substitutes a definition in which everything is social. This leads inescapably to a denial of impairment, and this is denial of reality.

No disabled person can afford not to be a realist. Yes, we can argue that the end-stage disabled person is a complex combination of causes, and some of these will undoubtedly be social. But, at the original level, impairment remains the primary cause of disability. When was the last time you saw a non-impaired disabled person?

Despite its professed radicalism, the social model of disability has now become as inflexible as the earlier medical definition it was supposed to replace. I particularly welcome Mr Low's emphasis on a complex model of disability. This chimes with my own view that disability should be seen in terms of a unitary, holistic model. It has number of distinct dimensions.

There is, of course, a social dimension to disability, and there is also a medical dimension, a psychological dimension and a sexual dimension (to name a few). The reality of disability is indeed complex and defies all reductionisms.

I believe Colin Low has done us all a great favour in sending a timely rebuke to the disability movement. Now let's see if they're big enough to move on. Michael Morgan is a freelance journalist and disability activist.



Colin Low's full lecture can be found at www.city.ac.uk/whatson/cityinsights.htm

Are charities practising what they preach about employing disabled staff, asks Rod Hermeston

Charities must try harder



They called for disabled workers' rights and got them through the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA). But a DN survey of 15 disability charities has found wide variation in the number of disabled people they employ, even though they all have equal opportunities policies. Among the bigger charities, the RNID does best by employing 16 per cent disabled staff. Leonard Cheshire lags behind on 0.8 per cent. Scope employs 2.98 per cent. Not much has changed since a similar DN survey* in 1998, though Mencap has doubled its disabled staff to 3 per cent. Last year's Labour Force Survey by the Office for National Statistics showed that 18.8 per cent of working age people have a disability. Among smaller groups, the British Council of Disabled People boasts 100 per cent disabled staff, while SANE employs no disabled people.

And within the new partnership between RADAR and the Enham Trust there is a wide difference. Other than its 88 supported employment staff, only 1-2 per cent of Enham employees have disabilities, while 41 per cent of RADAR staff are disabled. The charities give various reasons for the low figures.

'If you are committed to employing disabled people, the applications should be coming in'

Mencap and Scope, for instance, say the fact that they employ large numbers of care and support staff restricts who they can employ in those roles. Leonard Cheshire, which employs 5,500 care staff, says it has tried but failed to attract more disabled people to its 7,000 posts. Several charities point out that people reveal their disability on a voluntary basis

and might not want to do so. And Scope argues that disabled people should not be ghettoised in disability organisations. But Sue Maynard Campbell, managing director of disability equality consultancy Equal Ability, says: "Disability charities should be leading the way." And David Sindall, head of practice development at the Disability Rights Commission (DRC), says there is a "huge credibility gap" if disability groups use similar excuses to those used by other employers. Maynard Campbell argues that charities need to offer more work experience and employ more people through the government-subsidised Job Introduction Scheme. They could also offer apprenticeships. Sindall says: "The bottom line is if you are committed to employing disabled people and people understand you to be committed to employing them, the applications

should be coming in." Charities need to identify any barriers within their recruitment procedures and take greater account of the requirement of the DDA to make reasonable adjustments to the job itself, he says. The DRC will soon begin holding seminars for unsuccessful disabled job applicants to tell them how to improve their prospects at the DRC. Charities could do the same, he says. And he suggests charities could join forces to provide traineeships and develop best practice standards. The DRC is already helping organisations go beyond the DDA through its Actions Speak Louder than Words campaign, and charities could get involved to improve employment policies. A DRC bursary scheme is also being launched in the autumn, aimed at helping employers and service providers develop best practice. Some charities are already

taking steps to improve things. Leonard Cheshire has just started advertising all its jobs on the disability employment website Jobability.com. Scope Fast Track gives management training to ten disabled people a year. And the charity will be finding out from disabled people what it can do to make its mainstream jobs more attractive to disabled applicants. "We have not got all the answers at the moment," a Scope spokesman said, "but we are taking steps to find out what would ensure Scope is the sort of employer that people would want to work for and stay working for." But many charities still have a long way to go. Disability employment consultant Nick Goss says: "Disability charities need to recognise that they are perceived as and are the champions of disabled people." *Fax: 020 7619 7331, e-mail: editor@disabilitynow.org.uk

	No of employees	% of staff who are disabled	% of senior managers who are disabled	% of line managers who are disabled	Do you guarantee an interview to suitably qualified disabled applicants? If so, how many guaranteed interviews given in last 12 months and how many got the job?	Do you recruit disabled people who may not have all the necessary skills and give them training/support?	No of staff leaving in last two years who left on grounds of ill health/disability	No of jobs that are ringfenced for disabled people or where personal experience of disability is essential
Arthritis Care	263	Unknown	36%	Unknown	Yes; unknown	Yes	Unknown	At least 20% are ringfenced
British Council of Disabled People	14	100%	100%	100%	Yes; 19 interviews, 3 successful	Yes	None	100% ringfenced
British Deaf Association	47	34%	40%	33%	No	Yes	None	23% are ringfenced
Enham Trust – non-supported staff	181	1-2%	None	1%	Yes; none	Yes	None	None
Greater London Action on Disability	13	75%	75%	100%	Yes; no figure given	Yes	One or two	10 jobs are ringfenced
Leonard Cheshire	7,000	0.8%	2.6%	2.9%	Yes; figures unknown	No central policy	Unknown	17 jobs are ringfenced
Mencap	4,726	At least 3%	2.4%	1.5%	Yes; figures unknown	Yes	1.8%	None
Mind	120	No figure given			No	Yes	Very few	No figure given
Multiple Sclerosis Society	500	Not yet known			Yes; 2, neither got job	No	5	None
RADAR	19	41%	100%		Yes; 11 interviews for 6 jobs, 5 successful	Yes	None	None
Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB)	2,971	7.7%	11.7% earning £21,585+		No	Yes	4	No figure given
Royal National Institute for Deaf People (RNID)	1,480	16%	7%	7%	Yes; no figure given	Yes	2.23%	Only sign language training officers
Sane	42	0%	0%	0%	No	No	None	None
Scope	3,789	2.98%	1.85%	2.08%	Yes; unknown	Yes	4.16%	No ringfencing; experience required
Spinal Injuries Association	15	30%	75%	75%	Yes; 3 interviews, 3 successful	Yes	None	93% require personal experience



ILLUSTRATIONS: CLARE CURTIS

Letters to the Editor

Send your letters to the editor Mary Wilkinson, Disability Now, 6 Market Road, London N7 9PW, minicom: 020 7619 7332, fax: 020 7619 7331, e-mail: editor@disabilitynow.org.uk



To lie or not to lie so as to get benefit?

I am in a very similar position to your letter writer (DN, June), caring for my daughter, now 22, who has severe learning and physical disabilities.

She sleeps quite well most of the week but couldn't be left at night alone, can only cry for attention if in trouble, cannot help herself or move at all.

I cannot have the higher rate of personal care component of Disability Living Allowance. I have also been told I need to "enlarge/lie" on what I do during the night.

I feel angry when I see many people awarded this benefit who do not need the high level of personal care, even by day.

This could be one of the largest abuses of benefits payments. Celia Gingell Wadhurst, Sussex

The important thing for qualifying for the high rate care component of Disability Living Allowance is need.

The fact that the writer's 18-year old son does not receive help is immaterial and irrelevant, if you are able to show that he reasonably requires someone to check on him at night to prevent dangers, turn him, move him, check he is safe, etc. Then he could qualify.

If he moved from home, help

would be given by his local social services following a needs assessment for non-residential community care. Bill McCormack Dumfries Welfare Rights

I have a similar condition to the writer's son, but for three years now I have lived alone, independently, and would advise anyone who wants to do this that it is worth whatever compromises of integrity you have to endure.

As long as the benefit system is geared towards what we can't do, not what we can, we have to use it to suit us.

Alan Martin, e-mail

Brownie points for Tesco service stations

In response to your motoring article "Pressure on the pumps" (DN, May), when I need petrol I go to the Tesco Extra station in Barrow in Furness. I always go to the same pump. If it's in use I queue for it, then, when I

pip my horn in the agreed way, the staff always know where I am.

Jeanne Ellis, e-mail

I would like to nominate Tesco Cheriton, Kent, as the most

helpful garage service I have come across. I have a remote control that bleeps them when I pull up and they come right out and serve me.

Mrs B Jones Folkestone, Kent

Only 5,000 accessible homes in Scotland

For the estimated 40,000 people in Scotland who are wheelchair users, we have today just 5,000 houses which are wheelchair accessible. In Edinburgh, under the noses of the Scottish Executive and Members of the Scottish Parliament, the estimated unmet need for wheelchair-accessible housing is currently 2,000.

The latest draft housing strategy published by the council for tackling this shortfall beggars belief. The proposed rate for bridging the gap would mean that people currently looking for a wheelchair-accessible home would have to wait until 2068 before all the 2,000 homes needed were completed, with no allowance for growing demand. At this rate, many disabled people will have been born, lived and died before Edinburgh's strategy meets their housing needs.

Rationing services needed by excluded communities of people is, in itself, bad enough and clearly a contradiction of the government's mission on social inclusion.

Planning for a future which excludes those disabled people yet to be born suggests the mission has been deemed impossible before we even start to try.

Wladyslaw P Mejka

Director

Disabled Persons' Housing Service Edinburgh

Scheme is not the first

It was disconcerting to read that "Whizz-Kidz lands cash for new scheme" (DN, June) which will be "the first of its kind."

Since the Association of Wheelchair Children was founded in 1990, it has run 424 training projects and provided expert training for more than 2,300 wheelchair-using children in the UK, helping them to gain greater

independence and mobility of movement in the home and out of doors.

We evolved from the Newham Rollers, an East London activities group, and there is no charge for our service.

Eve Leigh

Chairman of trustees Association of Wheelchair Children London E16

The Whizz-Kidz press release about the training programme claimed it was the first of its kind - Editor

PC pulse

by Dan Batten

Co-op has it taped

The RNIB and the Co-operative Group's funeral service have produced a tape to help blind and visually impaired people make funeral arrangements. The tape goes into all of the less than pleasant arrangements that need to be done and is available at more than 300 Co-op funeral service branches. Well done Co-op. At least somebody realises that disabled people have to face real-life situations and don't live in protective bubbles.



Eur too slow!

A proposal has been put forward to make 2003 the European Year of People with Disabilities. Funding: 12m Euros. EU commissioner Anna Diamantopoulou reckons that 2003 "must be a time for Europe to become more aware of disability issues." Why not now, Ms D?

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Watching the Chelsea hues

DN's gardening correspondent Anne Davies and Emma Hawes "do" Chelsea

Chelsea Flower Show went for the minimalist look this year. Most of the show gardens were decking or concrete, with a few dramatic plants and endless blue glazed balls and pots peeking out from the foliage. Leaves were often the new colour for gardening – black.

Another theme was the cottage garden, filled with old-fashioned plants like irises, heathers and aquilegias.

The courtyard gardens were most impressive. Because they are small, it is easier to imagine the designs in your own plot.

Of these, the most accessible was from Blacon Garden Club, which won a bronze award. Its planters on casters could be moved easily and were tall so people with mobility problems could tend them. The *pièce de résistance* was a bench with an "arm" that could be moved to



EMMA HAWES

become a table for a wheelchair user. Holes in the table allowed containers to be placed securely while repotting. The club has two disabled members, who helped design the plot.

The other gem was A Trouvaille Garden by Marshalswick Horticultural Society (bronze), made entirely of "found" objects. A cascade

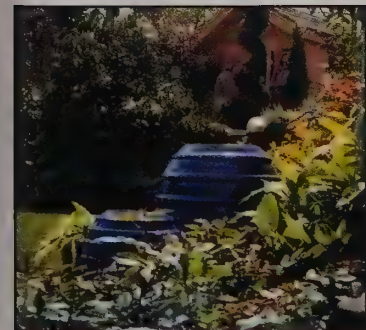
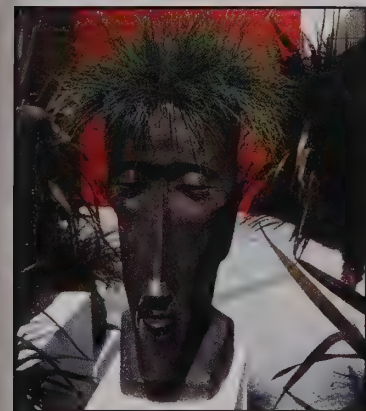
'A cascade was created from old water tanks, while the deck was made of recycled planks, beautifully weathered'

was created from old water tanks, while succulents peeped through a hubcap and the deck was made of recycled planks, beautifully weathered.

Another lovely garden was Memories of Rex by Bracknell and District Garden Club for the Able and Less Able (silver). It was designed and grown by club founder Rex Cheetham, who has motor neurone disease.

The show gardens were less inspiring, with the exception of the Prince of Wales' Carpet Garden (silver), based on the design of a Turkish carpet at Highgrove and filled with plants in a geometric pattern. Its slightly elevated position

Chelsea cheer: (clockwise from top) old-fashioned plants were a recurrent feature; the Trouvaille Garden; Spidergarden.com's Mother Earth; popular blue pots; Anne tries out the Blacon Garden Club table; a Fairweather sculpture



made it hard to appreciate fully.

The *Evening Standard's* Theatrical Garden was a stunning floral stage with low box hedging and purple irises. An angled mirror reflected the backstage area with a statue and dramatic alliums and red roses.

This could be recreated on a smaller scale in an awkwardly-shaped garden to make it appear larger and add interest.

Notcutts Garden Centres and *Gardeners' World* magazine produced a sensory garden full of herbs, fragrance and colour, with plants to attract insects and birds.

Access this year was greatly improved by portable plastic decking and large ramps, which made the whole show much easier for wheelchair users.

However, on press day there were no accessible ladies' toilets available until nearly 2pm, and while we were unable to check



out the accessible cubicle in the men's, we can only hope it was better than the one in the ladies' on Ranelagh Way. The door didn't open fully, while the sink was right in front of the toilet and had a vanity unit underneath. The flush handle was unreachable and the grab bar difficult to get into position.

The unisex disabled toilet on North Ranelagh Way was a dirty, smelly portaloo.

We couldn't find the toilet on

Western Avenue, and officials didn't know where it was either. Anne said the organisers, the Royal Horticultural Society, should offer disabled visitors truly accessible, clean toilets.

Actress Thora Hird, who uses a wheelchair, was also unimpressed. "It seems they have everything here at Chelsea, every seed, every flower and every plant, but no toilets!" For other flower shows, visit www.rhs.org.uk/events

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Planning some days out? Get your inspiration from the first part of *DN's* three-month Out and About special

The Morcom family enjoys a rough-and-tumble day at Diggerland

Bucket loads of fun



Dig it: this is your chance if you've always dreamed of being let loose on a huge mechanical digger

“A great fun day out guaranteed” is what the Diggerland brochure promised and that was certainly what it was. Our party to this new mechanical digger adventure

park in Cullompton, Devon, comprised Josh, six, who has cerebral palsy, Samuel, 22 months, Grandma, Mum and Dad. None of us knew what to expect, but we were very much

reassured by the friendly welcome from staff. We walked down to the shop and café area passing the park on the way, which got us all very excited. We were raring to go but had to watch a safety video first. Josh enjoyed driving the tractor with Daddy (I'm not sure who enjoyed it more). There was also a play area for the more able-bodied, with slides, a sandpit and bouncy castle. We spent ages in this area and fun was had by all, including Grandma. Joshua was able to go on everything in



Hold on tight! Rebecca, Josh and Jon on the Sky Shuttle


the park and especially loved the big banana boat swing. After a packed lunch in the park we enjoyed a ride on the Sky Shuttle, which is a tractor with a carriage of five seats in front. It takes you 30ft into the sky and then all around the park, including a dip in the river. Josh particularly enjoyed it – the rougher the better as far as he is concerned. Samuel and Grandma sat this one out. Finally, we did some digging in one of the smaller JCBs and ended getting more outside the hole than in it! We all had a thoroughly enjoyable day with lots to do. We have never been anywhere where the staff are so helpful. They would do anything, even help to get Josh in and out of

the diggers. Of course, it might have been harder if he had been older. We were also lucky to have a sunny day. Diggerland wouldn't be so great in the rain! There is easy access for wheelchair users. Entry is £2.50, senior citizens £1.25; rides are about £1 each. There are also Diggerland parks in Kent and County Durham. Tel: 08700 344437, www.diggerland.com



In the bag: Josh and Jon

DN next month



All the best news, views, jobs and offers. On sale 30 July.

PROFILE
Rising star? Unknown quantity? *DN* meets Maria Eagle, the new Minister for Disabled People.

HOUSE CONVERSION
Agnes Fletcher and Adam Thomas tell how they created their dream home.

MOTURING
DN test drives the new Vauxhall Corsa.

OUT & ABOUT (2)
More family days out including a trip to the new Space Centre.

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Taking a trip on a pony trap

My husband drew my attention to a Riding for the Disabled Association (RDA) carriage driving centre when he read an appeal for helpers in the local press. Being a lady of a certain age, and one whose balance is very uncertain, sitting astride a horse had neither attracted me nor seemed practical, but to be seated in your own wheelchair in a pony trap was different. So six years ago, on a damp April afternoon, I arrived at East Holton Driving Centre, Dorset, feeling rather apprehensive. I was introduced to a lovely little Shetland cross pony and put aboard a specially adapted carriage. My able-bodied co-driver showed me how to hold the reins and away we went for a bumpy ride. I knew immediately that this was going to be fun. “What do you think of it?” I was asked. “A challenge,” I replied. I was right. Driving larger ponies, bigger, four-wheeled carriages and learning to perform perfect circles and figures of eight takes time and practice. These move-

Brenda Thornton was apprehensive at first about carriage driving. Six years on, she is a real aficionado



Horsing around: Brenda Thornton (left) takes the reins

ments are necessary when entering a show. A good rapport with your horse is essential, as the spoken command is just as important as use of the reins. You need to have a doctor's consent form before being allowed to take an active part. Hard hats are provided, but drivers are advised to have a pair of specially designed gloves. People with weak grips can use adapted reins with loops. East Holton Driving Centre is set in a lovely holiday

complex for disabled people and carers. You can choose to trot down the fields to view the harbour or head to the heath and woodlands, always on the look out for natural hazards, which add interest to the outing! An Open Driving Show and Country Fair will be held in the grounds, 5 August, tel: 07776 383390. Holton Driving Centre charges £7-£10 for a session, tel: 01202 625562. For details of other RDA centres, tel: 02476 696510.

From corsets to Christian Dior

Dan Batten finds himself bowled over by the extensive fashion collection held by the Assembly Rooms in Bath

A trip to Bath is always a treat for architecture fans, but I bet you didn't know the city also has a collection of fashion from the 1700s to today, did you? Take yourself along to the Assembly Rooms and see this amazing display for yourself.

When you get there, you'll notice that the exhibition lives downstairs. Don't panic – there is a well-concealed lift operated by friendly staff, as well as ramps if that dreaded "out-of-order" sign rears its head.

The first thing I realised was that

this exhibition could pose a problem for visually impaired people. With some of the costumes dating from the 1600s, the lighting in the show is kept to a minimum to preserve the clothes, and that does take some getting used to. But everyone is given an audio guide to talk them through the exhibits.

First up is a stunning array of dresses from the 17th century, oddly known as "undress." Upper-class ladies around the home wore these elaborately constructed garments during the day – and they look like they took most of the day to put on, many coming in three pieces. When the women were fed up with these highly decorated dresses they would hand them on to a lucky servant.

One essential garment back then was the corset – the Assembly Rooms have one particularly horrifying example on show which looks more like a

wristband than something to go round your waist.

This kind of restraint on women's freedom didn't begin to change until the 1920s, when some wonderful dresses emerged. They were shorter than before and allowed more room for manoeuvre – perfect for doing the Charleston!

Greater freedom

came in the 1940s. With women involved in the war effort, clothes needed to be more flexible to do jobs alongside men, though government rules meant that there were limits on how much fabric could be used in garments. This rule was flouted

in post-war years, with designers such as Christian Dior using up to 40 metres for one dress!

In the 1950s, London and Paris ruled the fashion world, as did off-the-peg clothes. For those on a tighter budget, sewing patterns and the Singer sewing machine were the order of the day. Clothes produced by the likes of Hardy Amies *et al* were out of the reach of most women's pockets, so sewing patterns often copied their designs. Some of the fabulous dresses that were made back then are now on display in the temporary exhibition *Fashion in the 50s*.

There's some wonderful stuff from the way-out 1960s, including a clear PVC coat and black skirt, topped with a transparent red hat that looks like something straight out of *Thunderbirds*.

The museum owns around 2,000 items but can only show ten per cent at one time.

If what they have tucked away is half as interesting as what I saw, I'm going to sew up another look as soon as I can.



Pictured: (left to right) blue silk dress c1865; selection of 1950s dresses; 1960s outfit



Museum of Costume, Assembly Rooms, Bennett Street, Bath, tel: 01225 477789. Open daily 10am-5pm. Admission £4.20 adults, £11.50 for a family ticket (two adults and four children). The special exhibition *Fashion in the 50s* runs until 4 November. The museum has a wheelchair available.



WELCOME TO ALL AT PORTSMOUTH HARBOUR

When it comes to a warm welcome Portsmouth has centuries of experience – home to the Royal Navy for over 800 years and now a world class centre for maritime events. Portsmouth City Council has this year produced a new brochure for disabled visitors and residents of Portsmouth. It is entitled 'Accessible Portsmouth, Guide for Visitors with Disabilities'.

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Cycling is fun and it's therapy too. As this month's Parent's voice, Judy Cobbett describes the bike club she set up

'Cycling gives such a liberating feeling'

I have always been a cyclist, and my daughter, Joanna, rode on the back of my bike from an early age.

So she was keen on wheels right from the start and took to cycling without much difficulty. This stood her in good stead when she was brain-injured at the age of six by viral encephalitis, since it was one of the things she had enjoyed before her illness which could also serve as ideal therapy.

Having lost her sight and sense of direction and been left with unpredictable epilepsy, riding her old bike was out of the question. An enterprising rehab team from the hospital adapted a tricycle for Jo, with a seat belt and foot straps to keep

'I was immediately struck by how well cycling served Jo's needs, enabling her to enjoy a challenging physical activity'

her on, come what may. We enjoyed many a sortie on this, which was an interesting activity to say the least.

I was immediately struck by how well cycling served Jo's needs, enabling her to enjoy a challenging physical activity which would rebuild her



On their bike: Judy and Jo on a Howie dual therapy cycle

strength and develop her co-ordination. After three months at her bedside, wondering whether the doctors' dire predictions would come true, we were thankful to have our Jo back again, with her old zest for life, but it was soon beyond my strength to keep up with her and manage kerbs and other obstacles. So a new home was found for the trike at her school, where they also

acquired a brilliant two-seater "sociable" with the controls on one side, so that both riders could pedal and negotiate obstacles in safety – the perfect solution to her needs.

Some years later, Jo went north for further education and I found myself hard at work on a carers' support project, which was an opportunity to research and develop services for people caring at home for frail or

disabled relatives. Remembering the cycle that Jo's school had latterly acquired, I put forward a proposal for a community resource of specially adapted cycles in one of our local parks. This plan was endorsed by a survey of Richmond parents, and, with a bit of persistence, the Royal Parks were persuaded to house the Companion Cycling project in their Environmental Education Centre at Bushy Park. They made us a secure cycle store

remarkable good grace. A local business printed the first publicity posters and the Royal Parks supported the launch in June 1996.

Within months, donations of outgrown tricycles and ordinary two-wheelers together with offers of time, help and money were trickling in, and our membership was growing steadily.

The scheme's appeal is universal. With a companion, absolutely everyone can experience the fun of cycling, a

'With a companion, absolutely everyone can experience the fun of cycling, a feeling so liberating that it has been likened to flying'

and gave our members privileged access to this beautiful royal deer park near the Thames at Hampton.

Using funds from local charities, we put together a fleet of specialised cycles, starting with a Danish side-by-side, a German wheelchair tandem and a smaller "sociable" from a firm in Scotland. Friends and acquaintances gave all sorts of help, beginning with a friend of Jo's, who designed our exuberant logo. Jo herself tolerated a good many incursions into her usual holiday routine with

feeling so liberating that it has been likened to flying.

The park is a haven for birds, deer and other wildlife, where our cyclists can enjoy the changing seasons. We attract members from a wide area and are able to run on a non-profit basis.

We have always aimed to acquire the best models available and to have a cycle to meet every need, and we constantly research new designs and develop ideas to build the most versatile fleet possible.

From small beginnings, we have grown into an organised charity with a hard-working board of trustees and a team of committed volunteers.

We aim to bring cycling to as many people as possible, and for that reason our charges are modest. Annual membership costs £10 and cycle hires are £3 per hour's session. One-off group visits are available at a higher charge, reflecting the extra volunteers needed and the number of cycles used. For people who visit without an active companion, we can usually provide a cycling volunteer at no extra cost.

My hope is that there will be more resources like ours, publicised through a national network, so that people can cycle in a range of locations, and go on specialised tours and holidays here and abroad.

To start with, I am especially interested in developing something similar in Harrogate, so would welcome contact with anyone interested in that part of the world.

Companion Cycling, www.companioncycling.org.uk, tel: 07961 344545.

See also cycling supplement, DN March.

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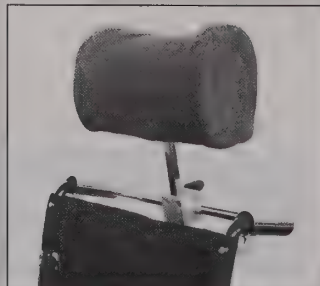
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Some top tips for trips


There are great things going on all over the country, says Dan Batten


 This year's Chichester Festival Theatre, until 29 September, has something for everyone, including *Alice's Adventures*, a production by the Chichester Festival Youth Group, 30 July-3 August. For details, tel: 01243 781312 or visit www.cft.org.uk

 If you've ever fancied trying your hand at weaving a rug, the North York Moors Centre is holding a class to help you do just that. You can also have a go at stick weaving and find out about new approaches to traditional weaving skills. 29 July, £3, tel: 01287 660278.

 The Southern Tourist Board has a free pocket guide available from local tourist information centres. Among the ideas for days out are details on the Sir Harold Hillier Gardens and Arboretum in Romsey, Hampshire, a 180-acre public garden, home to 12,000 types of plant. *Sir Harold Hillier Gardens*, adults £4.25, concessions £3.25, children free, tel: 01794 368787, www.hillier.hants.gov.uk. For details of events in the south, visit www.southernthb.co.uk

 Science boffins will enjoy the Magna Science Adventure Centre in Rotherham. Situated in the former Templeborough steelworks, the centre explores the elements of earth, fire, wind and water. You can travel through the steel face, take a look at steelworkers' lives and experience the "big melt", which brings the original furnace of the steelworks to life. Adults £5.99, children £4.50, concessions £4.50, families £17.99, carers free, tel: 01709 720002, website: www.magnatruss.org.uk

 If castles float your boat, there's sure to be something to interest you at Sherborne Castle in Dorset. Built by Sir Walter Raleigh, it has pictures, porcelain and other treasures, along with grounds designed by Capability Brown. There is an outdoor production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, 31 July. Adults £5.50, children £2.75, OAPs £5, tel: 01935 813182, fax: 01935 816727.

 For sea dogs, a trip to the Merseyside Maritime Museum in

Liverpool is a must. Displays include artwork, models and the story of the navy. Events include a model boat weekend, 4-5 August. Adults £3, children/OAPs free, concessions £1.50, tel: 0151 478 4499, website: www.nmfm.org.uk

 Don't miss the Cambridge Folk Festival, 26-29 July, which features acts from around the world. There are also workshops, craft stalls and much more. Tel: 01223 457245, www.cam-folkfest.co.uk



Steel yourself: the Magna Science Adventure Centre in Rotherham



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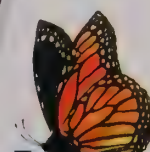


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THE FLEXIBLE SPECIALISTS PROVIDING THE ANSWERS

Here comes the sun! Anne Davies finds out how you can enjoy it without worrying about ill effects

At the first sign of summer, most of us are out, forgetting the harm that sun rays can do to our skin.

But by taking a few simple precautions you can avoid the risk of burns and skin cancer.

Use a good sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) no lower than 15. You need to apply it frequently, and your cream should be waterproof if you're swimming.

The most expensive creams are not necessarily the best. It's the SPF that counts – the higher the number, the more protection you have.

There are many tried

and tested sunscreens on the high street, such as Ambre Solaire and Piz Buin, as well as shops' own brands.

Imposing the ray ban

Johnson's Suncare for Kids (SPF35) provides extra protection for delicate skin. It won't hurt children's eyes, is sand proof, rub proof and extra water and sweat resistant (£10.75 for 200ml). For babies there is Johnson's SPF30 Ultra Sunblock (lotion £10.75 for 200ml, cream £8.75 for 100ml). Available at Boots, Asda and independent chemists.

Don't lie in the sun from 11am to 3pm, and wear sunglasses and a hat.

Babies should always be kept in the shade. Toddlers and youngsters running around should wear wide-brimmed hats. John Lewis stores stock "sun-protective"

clothing for children, including the Platypus range, with sun suits for boys (£29), sunskirts in bright colours (£19.50) and shorts (£14.50).

If you want the bronze look without the risk, try a fake tan and stay in the shade. These products have

improved in recent years – many are now a better colour, easier to apply and longer lasting.

These ones produce an even colour – Ambre Solaire Bronzer (£7.45 for 100ml), Lancome Flash Bronzer (£16 for 150ml), and Estée Lauder Bronze Self-Tanner for legs (£15 for 150ml). Sainsbury's self-tan (£4.99 for 200ml) did well, but the colour didn't last as long and it was a bit on the pale side. Always read the instructions carefully.

Protect your lips, too. Try Lipsyl Max, which has an SPF of 35 (£2.05).

Eyes need to be cared for as well. Always buy sunglasses which conform to standard BSEN 1836 1997. Make sure they fit well, too – go for wraparound styles to stop rays getting in from the side.

You should be able to get good quality sunglasses from independent chemists or high-street stores. Don't forget – expensive doesn't necessarily mean the lenses are any better.

Foster Grant's Kids Selection come with colourful frames and quirky styles (£5.99-£6.99). There are even ones for babies. Adult styles start at around



Cool shades: Foster Grant sunglasses for boys (above) and girls (left)

£6.99. All are available in high-street stores.

If you normally wear glasses, have a look at the wraparounds from Innovations. These are worn over your normal glasses

and cut out rays from any angle. www.innovations.co.uk

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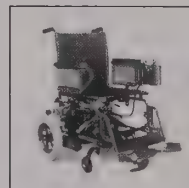
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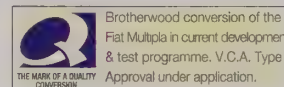
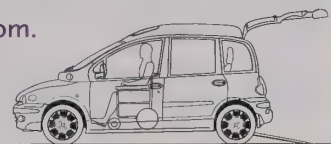
A Choice from Brotherwood



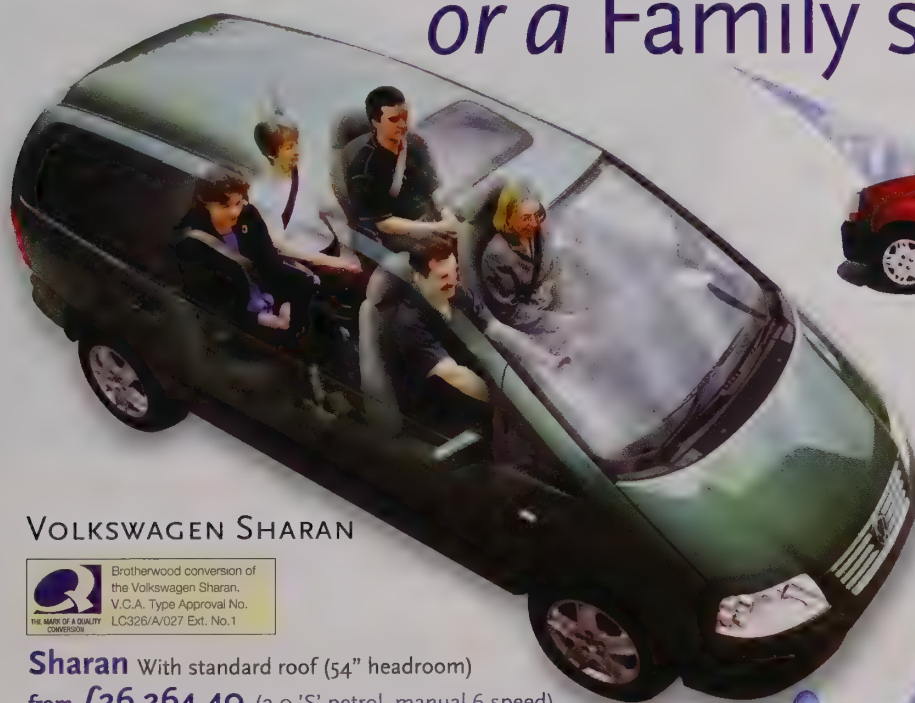
Side by side - *Fianco a fianco*

The Brotherwood conversion of the award winning Fiat Multipla, a car conversion which offers excellent visibility, comfort and safety for the wheelchair passenger travelling in their own wheelchair, "side by side" with the driver.

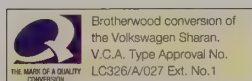
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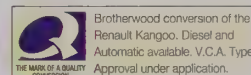
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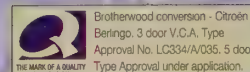


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TV



The TV programmes were so grim this month I started reviewing the commercial breaks. Have you seen Mat Fraser doing his Virgin mobile phone ad? And B&Q using a female amputee in their promotions? Brilliant. Not sure about Irn-Bru's ramraiding electric scooters though...

ER continues its cracking pace on C4 – but have you noticed Weaver's now-you-see-it-now-you-don't elbow crutch routine? One minute she's hobbling up the corridor with it, the next she's saving lives with no apparent need of mobility aids whatsoever – interesting.

Another crop of gloomy films hit the small screen over the last few weeks – Marlon Brando as an ex-soldier struggling to accept his paralysis in *The Men* (BBC2); the story of Michael, a young boy with autism who is abused by a carer at his school in *A Touch of Truth* (BBC1); and finally, *A Private Matter* (ITV), the story of Sherri Finkbine, a 1960s US kids' TV presenter who is publicly vilified when she chooses to have a pregnancy terminated because her baby may be affected by thalidomide. Please. Is this the best they can do?

Body Story (C4) has been an interesting series, using dramatic scenarios and fancy computer graphics to illustrate such things as everything-you-wanted-to-know-about-anaphylactic-shock-but-were-afraid-to-ask. I particularly enjoyed the narration by James (*Cold Feet*) Nesbitt.

I imagine the Ugly Model Agency will have been inundated with enquiries after C5's revealing and affectionate documentary about the extremely diverse and "different" people on their books. At Ugly, being different is a cause for celebration – how marvellous.

That's Esther (ITV) campaigns tirelessly for such worthy causes as Whizz-Kidz – a charity that provides power chairs for young disabled children. Apparently, there are over 20,000 children in the UK who would benefit from these chairs, but the government instead spends money on dodgy domes, wobbly bridges and opera houses for posh people in London. What is that all about?

Jane Shepherd



TARIQ MIKKEL KHAN/BIRMINGHAM POST & MAIL

Drawing a crowd: The Artlink Exchange in Hull is holding an exhibition of Joshua Whitehouse's art, 4 August-6 September. Joshua, ten, who has autism, bases his intricate drawings on his imagination and interpretation of the world around him. Tel: 01482 345104, e-mail: artlink@pop3.poptel.org.uk

Dance



The large expanse of the Birmingham Rep's empty stage gave the setting for a memorable evening of contemporary dance from CandoCo in June.

Two startlingly different pieces were presented, the first choreographed by Javier de Frutos. *I Hastened Through My Death Scene To Catch Your Last Act* was an intense collage of gestures and movement saturated with human drama.

In the programme notes de

Frutos talks of his passion for Tennessee Williams, an artist he regards as "unveiling the deep crevices of human nature." At times bleak and disturbing, this was a powerful work that took us deep into those crevices, leaving us hanging in a state of emotional exhaustion.

Those looking for clues of an unfolding narrative may have been frustrated, but for me the sheer inventiveness of the choreography was enough, enjoyed as a patchwork of stunning movement.

The second piece, *Sunbyrne*, was, by contrast, a breezy wade through a number of classic

songs from the Beach Boys. Choreographed by Doug Elkins, the dances had a celebratory tone that was infectious and engaging. What struck me was the way in which disabled and non-disabled dancers interacted so skilfully together, exuding a mutual respect and empathy that was tangible and beautiful.

Sheer joy shone through all the pieces that made up *Sunbyrne*, and a sense that the performers felt fully alive.

Thank you CandoCo for a very special evening.

Jake Lever

For future performances, tel: 020 7704 6845.

Film



London Disability Arts Forum's third film festival opened strongly with *Rush*, the new drama from Cilla Ware and Ray Harrison-Graham, which follows the lives of six deaf teenagers at college.

Like their BAFTA-winning, *Dream On*, it has an absorbing script and tremendous performances. It looks like this team is moving towards making a deaf feature film.

But the festival is primarily about shorts.

I loved *Scotty Dogs and Shortbread*, an 11-minute animated history of Scotland from Glasgow's Project Ability. It's gory but hysterical fun.

The Ballad of Clara Two-step looked about to be tediously repetitious. But its repetitions have a point: it's about obsessive compulsive disorder, and it grips remarkably.

Allan Sutherland

The Passion of Theresa is full of intense Catholic iconography and repressed sexuality, while *Charlie – A Forgotten Hero's Tale* is a knockabout, silent-film parody about the worst carer in the world.

Liz Crow's *Frida Kahlo's Corset* uses an orthopaedic corset to show Kahlo's fierce refusal to be ashamed of her disability, and it is a remarkably assured debut.

Simon McKeown's *School* is an extraordinary gothic 3D animation set in a future institution, like a factory for making deaf people speak. Signing is punished, children have their hands tied, signs state "Speech is Beautiful." Nothing much has changed about oralism, in other words.

All films were sign interpreted; the big issue was audio description. This was highlighted by a discussion with Raina Haig, whose film *Drive* shows audio description can be a part of the film-making process.

Adoptive family needed



Zertasha and Mehreen are attractive Asian Muslim sisters who need an adoptive family.

Zertasha [11.11.00] is a lively, fit, healthy girl who is progressing well developmentally. She responds well to physical and verbal interaction.

Mehreen [8.1.99], her sister, has acquired some physical and learning disabilities since birth. She enjoys her baby bouncer, walker and gym. She also likes music and Asian films.

Both children are of Pakistani Muslim heritage and it is thought that an Asian Muslim adoptive family will best meet their needs.

If you feel you could be a suitable family for these children please contact Anne Convery, Newham Social Services, 46 Clova Road, London E7 9AH, tel: 020 8430 5095.

• We have other children with disabilities who also need permanent families. These children are from a wide range of cultural and racial backgrounds. Do contact Anne if you can be a suitable family for such a child.

...find information. Dan Batten takes a look at the options when you need answers

Ever racked your brains about where to get information on finding a job, what benefits you're entitled to or that piece of equipment you're thinking of buying?

Quite often we know roughly what we want. But sometimes we haven't got a clue where to look for help in making the right decision. The information is often available, but it can be well hidden.

"One of the hardest parts of finding good information is locating sources," says Ann Darnbrough, director of the National Information Forum and DN's agony aunt.

Before you start, think carefully about what you're after. Bear in mind that, once you find your source of information, you might need to make more than one phone call or visit before you get what you

want, so a bit of tenacity and patience is always useful.

"Don't feel you have to take the first bit of information you are offered," says Ann. "If you aren't happy with what you hear, try someone else."

Now that you know what you want, where should you start looking?

"If it's info that you need, you can't really beat your local library," says Ann.

You'll be able to find answers to many of your questions there and take advantage of the staff's expertise at unearthing information.

As well as books, most libraries have internet access nowadays too.

This is the fastest way to access information from across the globe. Many sites also put together newsletters, which they can e-mail to you, so you are kept informed of new events or developments.

However, it's best to be

cautious about the information you get from the web – there are millions of websites available and not all of them can be regarded as reliable sources.

If you have questions about a specific disability, charities are probably your best bet. They will have information or helplines that can give specific answers over the phone or they often have literature they can send to you.

There may also be a disability information and advice line (DIAL) in your area – get contact details from your local council.

So remember – when you're looking for answers, be patient and never take no for an answer. The information is definitely out there if you know where to look.

Employment

"I want to get off benefits and start earning my own money, but I need some advice on where to start looking for a job."

Talk to a disability employment adviser at your local job centre. They can offer advice on what jobs may be right for you and how to get training to update or learn new skills.



Caught in the net: Dan looks for information on the internet

Benefits

"I'm not sure what benefits I could be getting. Who can tell me what I'm entitled to?"

Most charities have a benefits officer who will be able to talk you through your entitlements. The Disablement Income Group, tel: 020 7263 3981, can offer benefits advice, as well as your local employment office and Citizen's Advice Bureau, tel: 020 7833 2181, www.nacab.org.uk

Equipment

"I'm having trouble getting in and out of the bath. Is there anyone who can help me find some equipment to help?"

Talk to the Disabled Living Foundation (DLF). Not only will their staff be able to help you find a way in and out of the tub, but they'll probably know where you can find equipment to help with lots of other tasks, some of which you can try out if you make an appointment. DLF helpline, tel: 0845 130 9177, Mon-Fri 10am-4am.

Education

"I want to go to university but need some help finding one that's disability friendly. Who can help?"

Contact Skill: National Bureau for Students with Disabilities, an organisation that provides information for disabled people in post-16 education, training and employment. They have a phone information service and publish books and information leaflets. Skill information line, tel: 0800 328 5050, minicom: 0800 068 2422, e-mail: info@skill.org.uk

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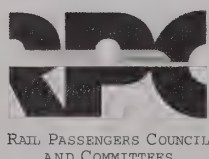
"I've just been refused admission to a restaurant because my wheelchair made me a 'fire hazard.' Can someone tell me what my rights are?"

Get straight on the phone to the Disability Rights Commission (DRC). They will be able to tell you whether or not the restaurant owner acted illegally, and should tell you if you have any legal recourse against them. DRC helpline, tel: 08457 622633, minicom: 08457 622644, e-mail: enquiry@drc-gb.org

Transport

"I want to learn to drive, but I'm not sure I could drive a regular car. Is there anywhere that could help me?"

Arrange an assessment with your local mobility centre – contact the Forum of Mobility Centres to find out where your nearest one is, tel: 01344 661000, www.justmobility.co.uk/forum. They will put you through tests to see what adaptations would make driving easier. You can also contact the Disabled Drivers' Association, tel: 01508 489449, or the Disabled Drivers' Motor Club, tel: 01832 734724, for information about disabled driving.



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The profile of Britain's railway system has never been higher. Everybody has a view on what should – and should not happen – to one of our most crucial industries. But is anybody acting on what you, as a passenger with special needs, have to say?

The eight regional Rail Passenger Committees do, and are currently looking to recruit new members (except in London*). The RPCs are made up of regular rail users from a variety of backgrounds who work together to improve rail travel and champion the views of passengers to the industry, the regulators and Government. They are the official independent voice of the passenger, and hold statutory public meetings throughout their region which senior figures from the railway industry attend.

- Are you a regular rail user?
- Do you want to contribute to making the passengers' voice heard?

- Can you give at least two days a month towards improving the railway?

Committee members receive a payment of £4000 per annum plus costs of attendance at meetings (such as child care allowances) and travel expenses.

Anyone can be a voice in the wilderness. Get on board and make your voice count!

For further details and an application pack please contact: Capita RAS, Innovation Court, New Street, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 7JB. Telephone: 01325 745170 (24 hours) or fax: 01256 383790. Internet: www.rasnet.co.uk Please quote reference B5719.

*The London Transport Users Committee represents passengers in Greater London. Prospective members should contact the Greater London Assembly.



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DN sent experts to the Naidex exhibition to check out what was on offer for mobility, the home and children

Chris Hobson set out to find new mobility products at Naidex in May – and wasn't disappointed

Moving with the times

This year's Naidex, in Birmingham, promised "one day – a thousand solutions" and it appeared to come up with the goods – there seemed to be something for everyone at the show.

With my brief once again to report for DN on new mobility products not previously seen at an exhibition, was there anything new worth commenting on?

Well, what about a ramp that folds into quarters? From the US, the aluminium **Multifold ramp** (available in this country from the Mobility Aids Centre) folds along both its long and short axis and can be carried like a suitcase.

Designed with style in mind, this manual wheelchair is available in three seat widths, comes with reclining back and elevating legrests, armrests that move to accommodate the reclining position, and all the adjustable, contoured, padded supports that you would expect in a comfort wheelchair. At £1,695, it is worth viewing. Tel: 01249 760586.

With a little ferreting around at Naidex, you can find examples of equipment that are truly innovative, and I was not disappointed when I visited the Uniscan stand. The highly manoeuvrable **Triumph tri-walker**, only 610mm (24in) wide, is the first one available with a seat. The walker has a simple frame-locking action which ensures stability. It folds



Lift me up: the Freedom Lift is not yet in production but is definitely worth watching out for

'This year's Naidex promised "one day – a thousand solutions" and it appeared to come up with the goods – there was something for everyone at the show'

Available in lengths of 5-10ft, the ramps unfold to a 30in wide platform and can take 600lbs. Prices start at £275.56. Tel: 01733 342242.

Or what about a wheelchair (to quote the blurb) that for comfort, styling and performance is "arguably one of the most comfortable chairs in the marketplace"? Urathon Europe has introduced an "all-day" comfort wheelchair with multiple positioning choices.

and, at 6.5kg (14.5 lbs), is light enough to be easily transported. It has a cable brake system attached to height-adjustable handles, incorporates a backrest and shopping holdall and is delivered fully assembled. £175, tel: 01268 419288.

The **Wheeltech Easibrake** on the Medicare stand was another innovative find. Designed for carers needing assistance in slowing/stopping

a manual wheelchair, this piece of kit can be attached to

most standard manual wheelchairs to provide a safe and secure braking system when going up or downhill. And at £34.99, it will not break the bank.

Also at Medicare was the **Adventurer Powerchair**, aimed at the young, active user. This three-wheeled powerchair is operated by a dual-handled steering/braking system. The Adventurer is designed to be stable, responsive and fun to use. It costs £995 but will not be available until later this year. According to Medicare, the chair has already generated a lot of interest. Tel: 01484 401519.

And finally, I come to the

Freedom Lift, another product that is not yet in production but which generated a lot of interest at Naidex. Specifically designed for a family member and tested extensively by her for 18 months, this drive-on scooter lift is about to go into production. The designer says it will fit most cars and is easily operated. The price will be

around £1,400, and this is definitely one to watch out for. *Marketeer (London), tel: 020 8803 8446.*

If you missed the Freedom Lift at Naidex, it will be at the Mobility Roadshow I'm told. See you there?

Chris Hobson is an occupational therapist at Disabled Living, Manchester.



New at Naidex: (left) Urathon's "all-day" comfort wheelchair, and (right) Uniscan's Triumph tri-walker

Where a gravity drain is not an option the Whale kit provides a reliable solution to draining showers.

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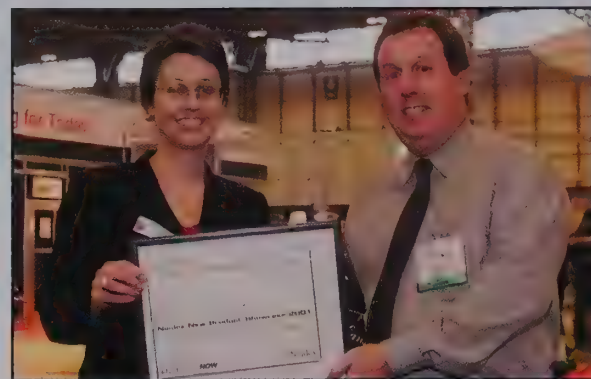
Bath lift shines at the Showcase

A bath lift with "great appeal" for anyone needing a lightweight lift that reaches the bottom of the bath has won this year's New Product Showcase competition – and a magnum of champagne. Sponsored by DN, the award goes to new equipment which visitors at Naidex vote most useful and innovative.

The Bath Buddy bath lift (*left*) from RBF Healthcare won votes for its lightweight efficiency. Occupational therapist Mary Queally found it "surprisingly stable for an inflatable seat."

Runners-up were Molly Polly Bootees and Sculpta Ceramics' Refresh Wash Basin (*see below*), Creative Healthcare's Impey Shallow Gulley, a shower drainage system, Nottingham Rehab's Saturn Transfer Disc, a turning aid for people who can stand, the Liftabout Lightweight Lifting Frame, Sidhil's Inspiration children's cot, which is fully adjustable and comes in bright colours, and Mangar International's Handy Bather.

The shortlist was drawn up by Rob Jackson, director of the Derbyshire Coalition for Inclusive Living, Mary Queally, head of advice services at the Disabled Living Foundation, and Dan Batten of DN.



Bath beats the rest: exhibition manager Maria Lenaghan and RBF commercial director David Smith

Make life easier on yourself

Mary Queally finds innovative twists in some of the home products on show at this year's Naidex

I went along on the first day of this year's Naidex exhibition and was pleased to see a lively, well-attended show. It was exciting, too, to see the launch of some innovative and well-designed products.

I was impressed with Sculpta Ceramics' new Refresh Wash Basin. It's an innovative design, useful for anyone preferring or needing to sit to wash. The off-

centre positioning allows the basin to be used from either end as well as the front – handy in small bathrooms. You can tuck your knees completely underneath and there are hand grips to pull yourself close. £150 excluding taps, tel: 01782 575707.

Another unlikely candidate for a makeover is the female urinal, but Nottingham Rehab

Supplies had exactly that on their stand. The Femupan, only £19.50, is designed to be wide but almost flat so that it is easier to position underneath you. The top is slightly sculpted, so that once in position it is surprisingly comfortable to sit on (yes, I did try it). Because you sit on it, it feels much less likely to leak than the swan-necked ones often used. Tel: 0870 6000 197.

Centromed was displaying its new Handi Turner, which retails at £400. This sits on the bottom sheet of your bed and

tucks under each side. Once in place, the device is used to turn you on to your side, which can be important for anyone needing to shift position for pressure care but who wants to be able to do so independently. The action is extremely quiet, slow enough to feel controlled and easy to operate via a handset. Tel: 01233 635353.

RBF launched their Bath Buddy, a seat-shaped, inflatable bath lift (*see above*). The seat is designed to be slip resistant, with the small backrest providing support. I tried it out and it felt surprisingly stable for an inflatable seat, although it's probably not suitable for anyone needing a lot of support. It does, however, have great appeal for anyone needing a lightweight lift which deflates fully to enable you to reach the bottom of the bath. £595, tel: 01702 527401.

Finally, Rachel Groom was displaying her Molly Polly Bootees, based on the needs of her grandmother, who had great difficulty finding footwear. The toe is reinforced into a dome shape and whilst it obviously looks big, it avoids contact between the wearer's toes and the fabric. The back of the slipper opens completely



In control: the Handi Turner

and it can then be adjusted further using a strap on the instep. They are not available on the NHS yet but can be bought for £29.99. Bespoke sizes, including odd-sized pairs, will be made upon request. Tel: 01923 264042.

Apart from trade stands, there was also a busy seminar programme. Some were aimed at the general public, but the focus was mainly on talks for health workers and the trade. All very well for those groups, but could we have more for other visitors next year please? Mary Queally is head of advice services at the Disabled Living Foundation.

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Clean design: Sculpta Ceramics' easy-access Refresh Wash Basin

From tea sets to trikes

Anita Stack scoured this year's Naidex for new children's equipment

Looking around for children's equipment at Naidex, I have to admit I was slightly disappointed by the number of new things on offer. What I did find, though, was innovative enough to make up for that.

Sculpta Ceramics was showing its stylish range of cups and beakers with easy-grip handles. The idea is that



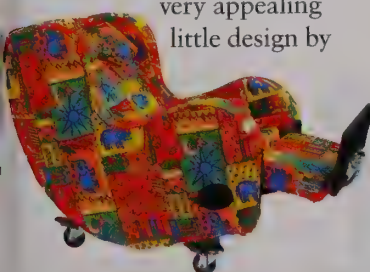
Tea time: Sculpta Ceramics has produced a tea set that won't look out of place

most other ranges of crockery for children and adults with dexterity problems are made of plastic, but these are ceramic and will not differ much from the crockery used by everyone else. From £6.99, tel: 01782 575707.

I was also impressed by two new seats at the exhibition.

The first was the new Kirton design, the **Mini Ultima**. The style of chair itself is not particularly new, but Kirton has spent time thinking about the manual handling difficulties of getting a child in and out of the seat. The design allows the legs of a hoist to get under the chair for easy access, which could make manoeuvring much easier. From £630, tel: 01440 705352.

The second seat I liked was a very appealing little design by



Careflex, the Mini Spectrum (above).

It was very comfortable – I tried it – and also lovely and bright. The chair has a sophisticated, water-based form of pressure relief for children and adults, which moulds beautifully to the shape of your body. It would be a very useful home chair for a child who needs moderate support. From £875, tel: 01626 836440.

But the most exciting new product I saw at this year's Naidex was the **Power Trike**

(right) from Freedom Re-Design. The trike attaches to any standard wheelchair and transforms it into an exciting power bike which any adult or child would love. It looks good, it's trendy and it feels great to manoeuvre.

I just couldn't resist having a go. I drove all the way round the exhibition and found it very easy to use.

I think this trike, which can be used off-road and comes with easy instructions, would greatly increase a child's

independence as well as being enormous fun. £995, tel: 01763 244268.

Anita Stack is superintendent physiotherapist at Craig-Y-Parc School, Cardiff.



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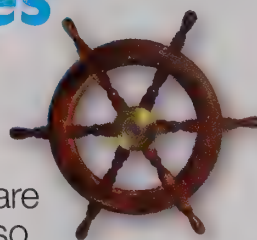
city stays



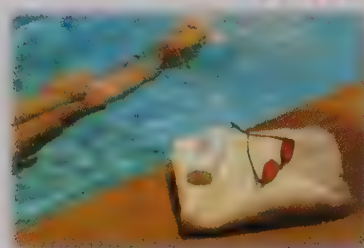
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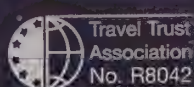
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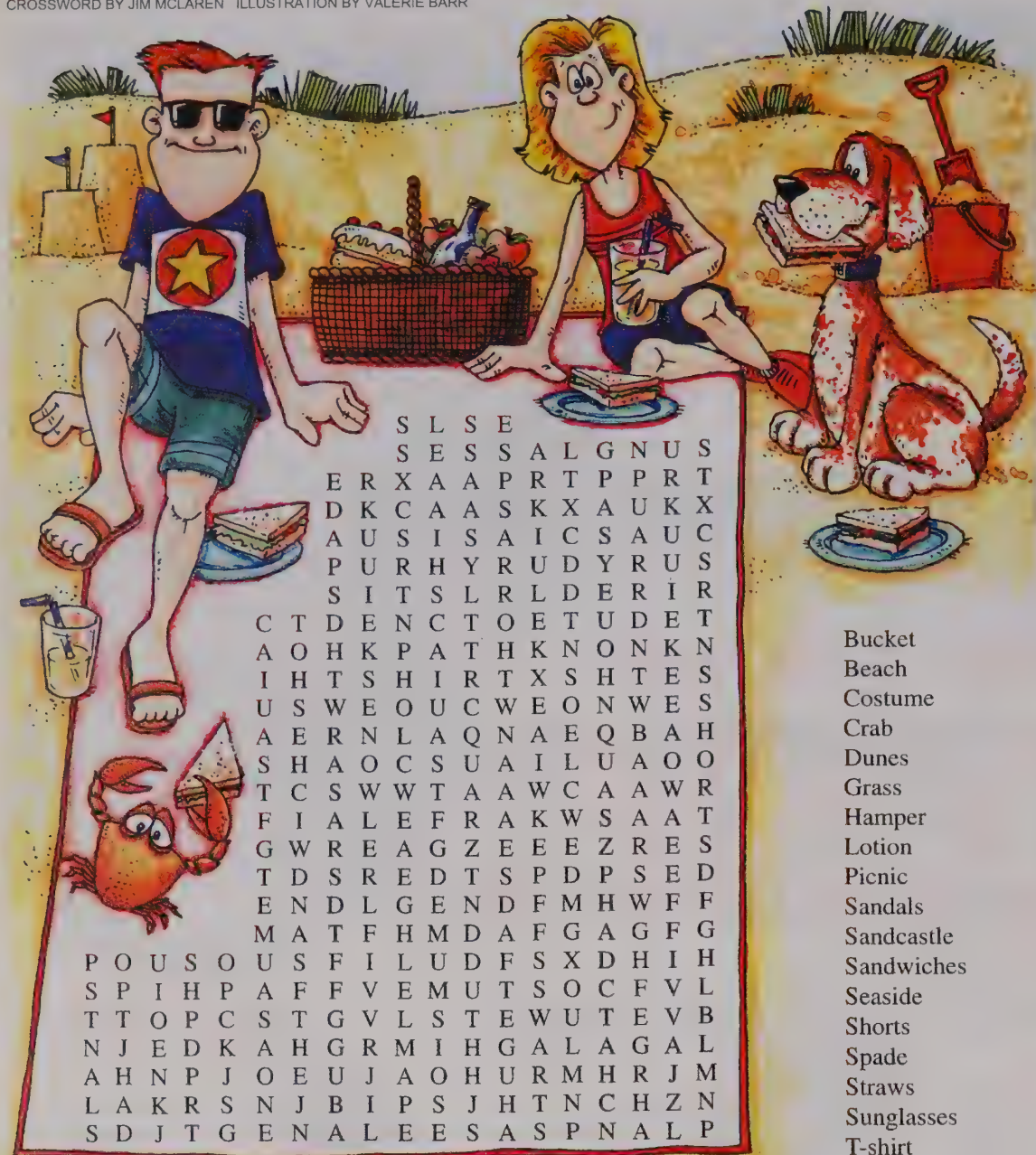
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Bucket
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 Sandcastle
 Sandwiches
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 Shorts
 Spade
 Straws
 Sunglasses
 T-shirt

With everyone enjoying the rare British summer sun and heat, here's a topical wordsearch to have a go at. Once done, why not take a look at our ideas to get you "Out and about" on pages 24-27?

WORDSEARCH SPONSORED BY
Creating opportunities with disabled people
LEONARD CHESHIRE

Candid Dan



This month Dan gets away from it all with, for him, a surprisingly quiet break

After a manic spell of late, it was time for me to get out of the "Big Smoke" for a while.

Being able to spot a shattered moi, Becky sorted us out with a cottage on the lovely Suffolk coast, at Southwold, to get a rare glimpse of "Mr Sun" and recharge our respective flat batteries.

Even though we explored the town, we sat back and relaxed with a passion that would have made Jim Royle look active. This suited me fine. Our aversion to the kitchen meant local restaurants were rubbing their hands with glee. Shares in Adnams brewery soared, helped by Becky's generous sponsorship.

Although our local shops were nice, they didn't allow me to indulge my passion for buying clothes. Good news for my pocket, as my outlay was restrained. But all my good intentions were shot to dust when Becky parked outside a surfer's shop in a neighbouring town one day. As if by magic her eye caught an expensive pair of trendy trousers, which then found their way onto my legs. I thought they were chosen to accompany my suntan and transform me into "surfer dude". Alas, no, they were picked to give my "expanding tum" a bit of breathing room.

We relaxed with a passion that would have made Jim Royle look hyperactive

Not content with a week away, I went to Chez Dr Winz in Chichester the day after returning home, for one of his celebrated barbecues. The pace was rather faster than on my week away, with food thrown at me from every angle, as well as vodka with gold bits in it. Whatever their purpose, they served it.

In the midst of all the gluttony, talk turned to Winz's wedding next year in Greece, where I'm co-best man. Suit fittings are pencilled in for this month; a bit of a gamble bearing in mind my "tum", and a stag weekend in Amsterdam is set. A shame really, that in a city of such artistic culture none of it will probably be seen. Still, with Ian documenting events on video, I should imagine there'd be more than enough material to create our own messy pollock-esque meister work. As well as a lifetime's supply of blackmail material for the groom.

Richard Needs a Family

Richard is a delightful young lad with lots of interests.

These range from computer games, karate, outdoor activities and especially walking the dogs, where he currently lives with his foster carers. Since moving to his current foster placement, Richard has made a special bond with his foster father.

It is the first time he has a significant male influence in his life. As you can see, Richard is a fine looking thirteen-year-old boy who has autistic tendencies - Asperger's Syndrome.

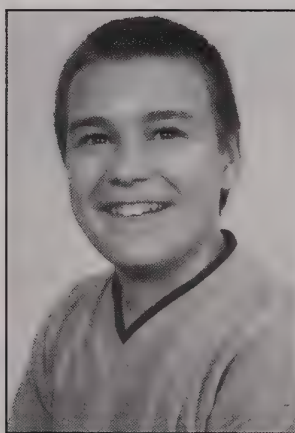
Once he has built a trusting relationship, he can be talkative and friendly, although at times he seems very isolated.

He attends a school for children with mild learning difficulties and has a statement of special education needs. Clearly, he will need help, encouragement and support with his schoolwork.

WHAT WE REALLY NEED FOR RICHARD

Richard is of White/UK origin and needs a long-term foster family that will offer him love, a consistent routine and support him as he grows up.

His new foster family will also need to support his contact with his birth mother and extended family, in particular with his eleven-year-old sister.



For more information about Richard and other Ealing children with special needs who need families, please call Ealing Fostering & Adoption Connections on:

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Scope highlights the best in commercial radio

Top commercial radio stations 95.8 Capital FM, County Sound and *Talk Radio all recognised one thing – that one in four households they broadcast to includes a disabled person says Sonya Roberts.

Scope the organisation working to achieve equality for disabled people, is celebrating the fifth anniversary of the Scope Action on Disability Radio Award. The charity's unique award recognises local or national commercial radio stations that demonstrate good practice in communication and involvement with disabled people.

It is one of 12 awards administered by the Commercial Radio Companies Association (CRCA) sponsored overall by the communications company, ntl. It has attracted nominations from high-profile commercial radio stations such as 95.8 Capital FM, County Sound and *Talk Radio now talkSPORT.

This year's successful nominees for the Action on Disability Radio Award, supported by DIY giant B&Q, are Northants 96 FM and Pirate FM 102.2. Northants 96,

in partnership with Barclaycard, has designed the 'Make a Difference Award' to give £5,000 to four charities that will make a difference to the lives of disabled people in Northamptonshire. The award scheme which runs for 12 weeks, not only provides funds, but just as importantly raises awareness by featuring key disability organisations on a weekly show.

Pirate FM 102.2 set up 'The Pirate Trust' nine years ago. They have been nominated for adopting a fun and imaginative approach to raising funds in the South West. Fundraising activities included a Radiothon and an on-air auction of goodies donated by businesses and celebrities.

Margie Woodward, a judge for the award and Scope's Disability Equality Training Advisor, said:

"Over the last five years the Scope Action on Disability

Radio Award has continued to encourage best practice which both benefits the radio industry, and the communities to which they broadcast. The award is a chance to give something back to the industry and to acknowledge the important role of commercial radio in meeting the needs of disabled listeners."

Entries are judged by a panel of disabled and non-disabled people from Scope and the radio industry. At the CRCA Awards ceremony later this month celebrity broadcaster, Chris Tarrant will present the winning radio station with the coveted CRCA trophy. They will also receive a £1000 cash prize, which the station will donate to the local disability project of their choice.

Past winners have reflected the wide range of programming which can change people's lives. Winners include County Sound for its 'Real Life' programme,

in 1998, which actively involved disabled people in debates on topical issues. Last year's winner, Isle of Wight Radio sponsored a highly successful radio charity auction, raising over £18,000 to fund a specialist respite nurse. Their prize money was donated to Medina House School which teaches 93 children who have severe and profound learning difficulties.

"There is still some way to go," continues Margie Woodward. "In the future I would like to see radio stations nominated for involving disabled people in the planning, production and delivery of radio programmes. This will be a huge step forward in creating positive change and improving public understanding of disability issues."

If you would like to nominate a positive on or off-air initiative by a commercial radio station call 020 7619 7199, or email press-pr@scope.org.uk

ntl:

B&Q

SCOPE

Top: DJs, Jono (Jonathan Coleman) and Erika North of Heart 106.2fm lending their support for Scope Action on Disability Radio Award.

Below: Margie Woodward and pupils from Median House School who were thrilled to receive a £1000 cheque from Isle of Wight Radio.



Planning for needs and rights

Joining up Government for Disabled Children by Robert McLean

Joined up thinking has become a buzzword in national and local government. Leading figures from government, the public sector, policy units and voluntary organisations will gather in London this July to see how theory can be turned into practice to deliver greater equality for disabled children.

This conference, *Planning for needs and rights*, will ask three key questions:

- how many disabled children are there;
- how should we plan to meet their needs;
- how do we ensure disabled children's views are part of the equation.

The conference will explore the developing agenda around disabled children's needs and rights and consider in what way new structures, initiatives and approaches can offer a joined-up response. It will also present a new report from Scope on changing patterns in cerebral palsy and question whether services are prepared for the scale and forms of childhood disabilities in the future.

Planning for needs and rights comes at a time when the needs of disabled children are at the forefront of the political agenda. The Government's increasing focus on children is seen in the new White Paper, *Valuing People* which addresses services

for disabled children, and the work of Quality Protects, Sure Start, the Children and Young People's Unit and the Children's Task Force.

This conference will bring together those at the forefront of policy and service development from across the public, private and voluntary sectors to consider the latest Government proposals and contribute to developing thinking in this vital area.

Speakers from the government and public sectors include the director of the government's Children and Young People's Unit, Althea Efunshile; head of the Sure Start Unit, Naomi Eisenstadt and Janice Miles,

the policy manager of the NHS confederation. From the disability sector, guests on the platform include the researcher Dr Jenny Morris and two Disability Rights Commissioners, Dr Phillipa Russell (also director of the Council of Disabled Children) and James Strachan (also chief executive of the RNID).

Richard Parnell, Scope's head of research and public policy, said "We are very pleased that the future planning around the needs and rights of disabled children is considered to be so important as to attract such an impressive list of speakers.

"We hope that the conference will underscore the extent of

the need of disabled children, the importance of monitoring the numbers of children with impairments and will lay an obligation on those attending to ask the children their views."

The conference is taking place at the **Thistle Hotel, Marble Arch, London W1** on **Thursday July 12 from 9am**. Enquiries and bookings can be made with Neil Stewart Associates on **020 7878 1040**. A full list of speakers and more information can be found at **www.neilstewartassociates.com/SH111** where bookings can also be made online.



Dear Ann

love and loneliness
bereavement
personal problems
advice and support

Ann Darnbrough, who is disabled herself, is co-author of the Directory for Disabled People and other guides. Write to her at Disability Now, 6 Market Road, London N7 9PW or e-mail: editor@disabilitynow.org.uk



Out on the town

I want to go to a nightclub but haven't yet found one that is accessible. I'm 30 and feel like I'm missing out. I would also love to get a group of disabled friends together. Can you help?

Joy, Bristol

That sounds a fun idea. If there are any readers in Bristol who are in the same boat, let me know and I will pass your names on.

I also suggest you contact the Outsiders club, which has lots of social activities. They are a lively bunch and I am sure they would have ideas. Some of their local clubs have regular

lunches, though not in Bristol at the moment. Perhaps you could start a local group.

Regarding accessibility, you could contact the University of Bristol Access Unit. I'm sure they would be able to advise you, particularly on how the Disability Discrimination Act affects nightclubs.

I want my life back

Since my partner died 14 months ago I have been very lonely. This is all made much worse because I can't go out.

I've thought of putting an advert in the paper for a male companion, but the very

thought scares me. All I want is my life back as it was before.

Pamela, Derby

I'm sorry to hear about your problems. It is natural that you feel as you do after losing your partner, but it is important that you begin putting your life back together. It is possible for your new life to be happy, but it will take time and effort. Keeping busy will help you.

Contact Derbyshire Coalition for Inclusive Living, who will help you develop a more independent way of life. You could also contact your local volunteer agency to find someone to help you. The

Longing for London

I want to live in London where I know a lot of people. I have been living at my present address in Nottingham for ten years. I'm registered blind and don't have any social life at all.

I have had no response from my council after a request for exchange five years ago. Please can you advise me.

YFY, Nottingham

You need to chase up your housing department and ask what progress has been made on your request. To get anywhere at all you will need to hassle these people over and over again until they know your name well and can't wait to get you settled.

You need to decide whether you want to go on the exchange list (there may well be Londoners who would like to move to Nottingham) or you could ask to be referred to a housing association who may make you an offer if anything suitable comes up. You would need to state your areas of preference (make them as wide as possible), the number of rooms you need and any other requirements.

A word of caution. Are you quite sure these Londoners you know will, after all this time, be friendly and helpful? And do they live in one area? London is a big place. Don't forget people's lives move on. Living in London can also be very expensive.

I don't want to put you off, but you do need to be sure.

Volunteer Centre in Chesterfield has a befriending scheme, for instance.

Fruitful exercise

I am horrified to discover, as a newly injured paraplegic, that I've developed a large pot belly. I used to do a lot of exercise and always had a flat tummy. What can I do?

Susan, Maidenhead

I know the very thing to set you on the right track. The Spinal Injuries Association (SIA) has two exercise videos, *Feel Fit* for paraplegics and *Wheelchair Workout* for tetraplegics.

They are presented by members of the SIA and cost £13.99 each.

Trust fund tips

My son gets Disability Living Allowance and Income Support. I'm trying to find out if there is any way I could give him an inheritance without his benefits being affected.

I have heard that a trust fund might give him access to the money I leave him. Have you got any suggestions?

Rose, London

I suggest you send for a booklet called *Getting the Most Out of a Trust Fund* by Michael Dunne. It has recently been updated. It costs £2.50 and you would need to send this amount with your order.

You may also want to ask a solicitor about the benefits of a trust fund and any problems you may encounter.

Derbyshire Coalition for Inclusive Living, Long Close, Ripley, Derbyshire DE5 3HY, tel: 01773 740246.

Michael Dunne, 5 Sheen Gate Gardens, London SW14 7PD.

Nottinghamshire Coalition of Disabled People, 32a Park Row, Nottingham NG1 6GR, tel: 0115 947 5531.

Nottinghamshire Royal Society for the Blind, Ortzen Street, off Peveril Street, Radford, Nottingham NG7 4BN, tel: 0115 970 6806.

Outsiders, PO Box 28724, London E18 1XW, tel: 020 8220 5949.

SIA, 76 St James's Lane, London N10 3DF, tel: 020 8444 2121 (ext 222).

University of Bristol Access Unit, Union Building, University of Bristol, Queens Road, Bristol BS8 1LN, tel: 0117 954 5727.

Volunteer Centre, 34 Glumangate, Chesterfield, Derbyshire S40 1TX, tel: 01246 276777.



If you would like to learn more about BP, please telephone our Distribution Services on 0870 241 3269 for a free copy of our audio cassette which gives highlights from our Annual Report 2000.

Help at the end of the phone

DN's telephone counsellor Lin Berwick can give

disabled people and carers advice and support on personal and spiritual problems.

Disabled herself, Lin is a psycho-therapeutic counsellor and Methodist local preacher, and she has a postgraduate diploma in homeopathic medicine. If you have something you need to discuss in confidence, talk to her on Mondays 6pm-10pm and Thursdays 1pm-5pm, tel: 01787 882111.



ILLUSTRATION BY CLARE CURTIS

• Regional

The Lesbian Community Project, Hulme, Manchester, holds a *Disabled Lesbians Social Group* on the last tuesday of every month. It's wheelchair accessible, and a BSL signer, transport expenses and taped information are all available. Tel: 0161 455 0212, fax: 0161 455 0213.

The Mid-Staffordshire General Hospitals Hospital User Group (HUG) are seeking members from ethnic communities and people with mental health problems, living in the local area. They aim to develop safe and accessible hospital environments, promote awareness amongst staff and create links with community bodies. A sub-group responsible for disability awareness training has been formed. For those interested, tel: 01785 782734, e-mail: mandy.gibbs@msg-h-tr.wmids.nhs.uk

• Websites

Changing faces is a national charity supporting people who have a condition that affects their appearance. Its website is packed with information, including support groups and medical conditions, and with advice such as for teachers or pupils and employers and service providers. www.changingfaces.co.uk

Thrive, the gardening and horticulture charity launched a new website at the *Mobility Roadshow* in June. Promoting gardening as beneficial to physical and mental health the site will include tools, easy access and maintenance tips and a text only version. www.carryongardening.org.uk

Formative Fun, the educational toy/game retailer has a website that lists a wide range of toys and games helping children with special needs. Each product is linked to a separate section that describes recognised conditions and their characteristics. There's also an panel of education specialists who endorse the products. www.formative-fun.com

Thus and Apart Consultancy are helping blind and partially sighted people to access the internet through a telephone helpline. It gives advice to customers on how to get online using Demon (Thus's ISP), how to use specialist IT packages such as screenreaders and magnification packages. It operates during office hours, tel: 01702 531157.



For Disabled People is a new "lifestyle" website offering disabled people news and information on everything from holidays, shopping for adapted goods, or their own disability. It offers browsers the chance to do a local search, by postcode, of products and services in their local area. www.4dp.com

• Publications

The Sainsbury Centre for Mental Health has a range of new publications that include: *Users' Voice*, £15 (£7.50 for users), that gives perspectives of mental health service users on community and hospital care; and *Clinical Risk Management*, £15, a clinical tool and practitioner manual. They also have new briefing papers, including the *Mental Health White Paper*, the *NHS Plan* and the *NSF for Mental Health* (each £1 a copy and 10p per subsequent copy). For a full list, tel: 020 7827 8352, fax: 020 7403 9482.



The Child Poverty Action Group have published its *Welfare Benefits Handbook 2001/2002*. Covering income support, job

seeker's allowance, disability and incapacity benefits, and disabled person's tax credit, it includes eligibility, calculations, sanctions, claiming and more. £24 (cheque payable to CPAG), from CPAG, 94 White Lion Street, London N1 9PF, or order using ISBN 1901698327.

Disability Alliance has published the latest edition of its *Disability Rights Handbook*, a guide to all social security benefits for disabled people and carers. It includes, new rules for Incapacity Benefit, increases and benefits for widows/widowers. £12.50 (£8.50 people on benefits), Disability Alliance, Educational and Research Association, Universal House, 88-94 Wentworth Street, London E1 7SA.

• Contact



The British Red Cross Count Me In! project has four youth members who, trained in befriending skills and using their own experience of disability, offer e-mail befriending support to those aged 16-25 needing help with access, communication or to overcome isolation. E-mail: countmein@redcross.org.uk

• What's on



Disability Equality in Education will hold a series of *Taster Days*; 6 July, Bristol; 13 July, Newcastle; 18 September, Manchester; 2 October, London; and 1 November, Birmingham. Topics will include new requirements under the Disability Discrimination Act for Schools, inclusion versus segregation, identifying barriers, and challenging behaviour. Full details, tel: 020 7359 2855, e-mail: r.rieser@btinternet.com



Regain, the charity supporting people paralysed through sport, seeks people to take part in its *Snowdonia Charity Challenge*, 15 July. Cycle 40 miles, climb Mount Snowdon and then canoe across Lake Padarn to raise funds, or why not enter a team of four? No canoe experience needed. £2,000 sponsorship required per team (£500 per person). Full details, tel: 01590 612227, e-mail: events@actionforcharity.co.uk



The Royal Society of Medicine will hold *Competence, Support and Meaningful Occupation in the lives of people with Learning Disabilities*, 18 July, London. It will highlight practice from the last decade with regard to competence and choice in everyday life, employment and leisure. Full details from Deborah Johns, tel: 020 7290 2984, e-mail: learning.disability@rsm.ac.uk.

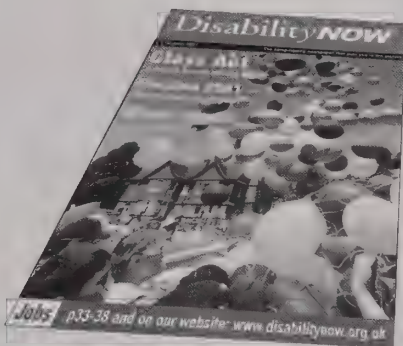
• They will also hold *The Learning Disability Nurse in the 21st Century*, 11 October, exploring initiatives of learning disability nurses working in partnership with healthcare professionals to improve the healthcare of people with learning disability, and *Sleep Difficulties in People with Learning Disability*, 6 December, looking at sleep disorder and its implications for daily living and learning. Contact details as above.

forum3, a careers and recruitment event for the non-profit making sector, will be held at the Business Design Centre, London, 31 August-1 September. It will provide recruitment opportunities for charities, housing associations, health trusts and universities, and job ideas and careers advice for anyone wanting to work in the sector. Admission is free. For details, contact forum3, 38 Bedford Place, Bloomsbury, London WC1B 5JH, tel: 020 7636 3900, fax: 020 7636 3331, website: www.forum3.co.uk

Changing Faces, the national charity supporting those who have a condition that affects their appearance, will hold a regional day, 1 September, University of Strathclyde. There will be talks by health professionals, discussions on the experiences of young adults and parents, workshops and



Disability nowhere? Disability now here.

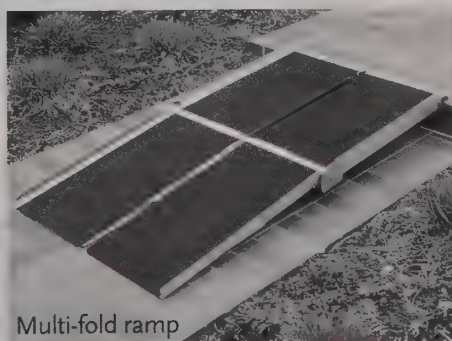


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www.themobilityaidscentre.co.uk

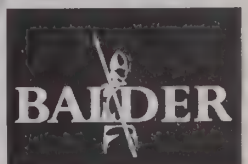
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• What's on

seminars, and activities for children over seven. Full details, tel: 020 7706 4232, e-mail: info@changingfaces.co.uk

The Ashwellthorpe Hall Association will hold *Get Practical – Positive Solutions for Disabled Living*, 5-6 September, Ashwellthorpe Hall Hotel, near Norwich. With exhibitors of mobility equipment, adaptations, furniture, and information from charities and agencies, visitors can try out equipment and get advice on leisure, employment and education. The hotel is fully accessible. Full details from Ruth Bullard, tel: 01508 489324, fax: 01508 488409, e-mail: ashwellthorpe@btclick.com

SCOPE will host the *Fourth World Congress on Conductive Education*, 12-14 September, London. With international experts it will include formal papers, video sessions, debates and discussions, and an address from the Prime Minister of Hungary (conductive education was developed at the Peto Institute in Hungary). Full details, tel: (44) 029 2089 1251, e-mail: cecongress@scope.org.uk

ACiP: Scotland and Communication Matters are organising two AAC study days, *Giving Augmented Language to Individuals with Cognitive Disabilities*, 13 September, Dunfermline, 19 September, Lancaster. They will cover Language content and structure, AAC teaching approaches, social and community-based strategies, and matching communication displays and approaches to language goals. Contact SCTCI, tel: 0141 201 2619, e-mail: sctci@waacis.edex.co.uk for Dunfermline, contact Communication Matters, tel: 0870 606 5463, e-mail: admin@communicationmatters.org.uk for Lancaster.

Communication Matters will hold their *Augmentative and Alternative Communication Symposium*, 16-18 September, Lancaster University. It will include workshops, presentations, case studies, present research papers, a trade exhibition and social events. Full details, tel: 0870 606 5463, e-mail: admin@communicationmatters.org.uk

Learning Disability Today takes place at Kensington Town Hall, London, 26 September. Aimed at people who work with those who have learning disabilities, the exhibition will include stands and seminars by government ministers and others involved in the National Learning Disability Strategy. For more information, tel: 01273 623222, or visit www.pavpub.com/pavpub/ldtoday

The Repetitive Strain Injury Association will hold their *Annual General Meeting*, 29 September, London. The open forum will discuss the Alexander technique, benefit advice, counselling and RSI Handbok information. Full details, tel: 020 7226 2000.

The MS Research Trust will hold its fifth *Annual Conference*, 11-13 November, Harrogate. This residential conference aimed at nurses, health/social care professionals has a plenary programme, seminars and workshops including *Disease Modifying Drugs* and *NICE: MS Guidelines Development*, as well as the skills training sessions *Research*, *Mind Mapping* and *Listening Skills*. Full details from Packer Forbes Communications, tel: 020 8772 1551, e-mail: ms2001@packerforbes.co.uk

Circles Network will hold the following courses during 2001: *Introduction to Circles of Support*, 11 July, Bristol; *Circles of Support in the Classroom and Community*, 17 July, London; *Advocacy*, 10 September London and 8 October, Bristol; *Facilitating Communication with Deafblind People*, 12 September and 10 October, Bristol; *Inclusion – so you think you are doing it*, 13 September, Bristol; and *Introduction to Circles of Support and Disability Equality*, 25 September, Reading. Full details from Evelyn Schneider, tel: 0117 939 3917, e-mail: evelyn@circles.demon.co.uk

INCLUSION

Due to print deadlines, please submit material as far in advance as possible. We cannot guarantee inclusion.

ON WEBSITE

Got something to say?
Want to find some answers?
Need a second opinion?

Then why not visit the Disability Now website and chat to others through the discussion forum?

Join in broad discussions such as access, housing, benefits, sports or employment, or start specific discussions such as those already there on mobile phones, the DRC, parking problems, the 2001 census, or positive attitudes to disability.

Also at the site:
News examples – June
Feature examples – June
Over 430 categorised links
Recruitment adverts
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Take part in the:
One World One Heart poetry competition
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www.disabilitynow.org.uk

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• Personal

MALE, VISUALLY IMPAIRED. 64, wltm a lady, 50-60, from same area (South Wales). Early retired, writer of fiction, poetry and crime novels based on career as social worker. Own home, no car but solvent. Own hair, clean shaven, green eyed, Leo. Box No. 107

MY NAME IS Michael. I am a Christian astrologer (not professional). I have a rare type of dyslexia. Interests are history, old time dancing, newspaper cuttings, piano and steam engines. I am a young looking 51 and wltm a lady, perhaps younger than me. I am 6ft and slim. I live near Bishop's Stortford. Box No. 108

SMART GENTLEMAN, MID 50s, healthy, solvent, traditional values, long-time divorced, seeks honest, sincere lady. Distance, age or disability not important. Box No. 109

LADY SEEKS COMPANIONS, men or women, aged 60, non-smoker, who likes bingo, going out, dining out, travelling abroad or around Great Britain. I enjoy country and western music and have my own car. Box No. 110

ALAN, 33, INTERNATIONAL disabled cricketer. Too many interests to mention but no one to share them with. Females for friendship and/or relationship; males for friendship. Box No. 111

INTELLIGENT FEMALE, 35, lives independently. Employed. Part-time wheelchair user, non-smoker. Interests include history, music, current affairs, the internet and general socialising. Seeks similar male. Bristol area. Box No. 112

CP GENTLEMAN, EARLY 50s, has had fame, travelled the world and done some amazing things. Wltm special female for further adventures. Own flat and car. London. Box No. 113

• Cars/vans/caravans

RENAULT TRAFIC, N REG
white, very low mileage, excellent condition throughout. Cassette radio, five seats plus wheelchair. First class conversion, Ricon electric lift.
£4,950 ono. Tel: 0116 291 2572 or 07778 316417.

NISSAN PRAIRIE 2.4, M reg, Brotherwood conversion with raised roof, automatic, air conditioning, 24k miles, fsh. Excellent condition, £8,750. Tel: 0121 779 2814 (West Midlands).

VW CARAVELLE GL, 2.4l, diesel, red, N reg, 76k miles. Vgc, full service history. Underfloor side access lift, left front swivel seat, clamping for 2 wheelchairs. £10,500. Tel: 01732 453300.

ELAP ROTATING PASSENGER seat for Ford Escort, as new. Cost £630, accept £250. Tel: 01332 863310 (South Derbys).

FORD TRANSIT CUSTOM, L reg, 62k miles, Ricon tail lift, tracking, metallic grey, alloys, MOT November 2001. £4,500. Tel: 01202 733171.

FORD TRANSIT VAN
2.5 TDi, with tailgate lift and tiller control steering. P reg, 42k miles, auto, excellent condition. Unwin tracking and two passenger seats. Conversion includes drive from wheelchair, electric brake and accelerator, remote control for all other functions including lights, wipers etc. One disabled owner. Would suit a disabled person who has some arm and hand movements. £32,000 ono. Roy Webb, tel: 020 7703 6442 or 07958 678882, e-mail: roy@sicilia.freeseerve.co.uk

PEUGEOT 309, FITTED Elap front passenger seat. Vgc, 1 owner, fsh. Mot Feb' 2002, E reg, 91k miles. Reliable, good runner. £450 ono. Tel: 01243 431414.

FORD FOCUS 1600
August '99, 12k miles. Fitted Constables electric chair and hoist. Fsh, little use, cost over £18,000, will sell for £10,900. Tel: 01233 712040.

VW CARAVELLE, K REG, diesel, 7 seats plus wheelchair. Hydraulic suspension, new MOT. £6,000 ono. Tel: 01749 840905.

NISSAN PRAIRIE MK2, auto, L reg, Brotherwood conversion raised roof, infill seat. Fsh, MOT Oct' 2001, vgc, pas. £9,500. Tel: 020 8942 7700.

FORD FOCUS ZETEC
automatic, equipped with Constables electric chair system. Passenger side, used for 6 months. Tel: 01263 721357.

FORD COURIER COMBI, Brotherwood conversion, 1.8, diesel, K reg, 1993, 106k miles, blue, good condition. Fsh, MOT until Feb' 2002. 4 seats plus wheelchair, ramp. £3,500 ono. Tel: 020 8568 8288 (West London).

FORD FIESTA COURIER van, 1994, 1.8, diesel, white, MOT May 2002, sunroof, stereo, wheelchair + 2 seats. £2,500 ono. Tel: 01273 400378.

CHRYSLER VOYAGER 3.3LE
1998, wheelchair adapted, 1 lady owner, 17k miles, automatic, top specification, wheelchair adaption for passenger. Must view. £16,000. E-mail: ajsargison@btinternet.co.uk Tel: 0151 520 1329 for details.

CHAIRMAN ESCORT 1995, 29k miles, Gowrings conversion, rear ramp, electric winch, wheelchair straps. Extra passenger seat, fsh, MOT. Excellent condition, £4,950. Tel: 01234 840806 (Bedford).

ELAP SWIVEL PASSENGER seat, Peugeot 405 saloon or estate. Good condition. £175. Tel: 01306 884908 (Surrey).

FORD COURIER 1.3, 1992, J reg, 44k miles, 11 months' MOT. 4 seats, rear ramp, power winch. £2,950. Tel: 01322 222757 (Kent).

RENAULT EXTRA VAN, L reg. Poynting conversion, blue, tax and MOT 1 year. 4 seats plus wheelchair passenger, 41k miles, ramp loading. £4,000 ono. Tel: 01562 67026 (Kidderminster area).

RAMPS, TELESCOPIC, SUITABLE for vehicle with wheelchair access, 2m length. £100. Tel: 01709 820644.

PARRY CAR-TOP hoist and sling, fits on car and roof like a roofrack. No need to modify car. £600 ono. Little used. Tel: 01932 342129.

CHAIRMAN KANGOO RN, 1.4, X reg, Nov 2000. Metallic grey, central remote locking, power steering, 6,500 miles. 4 seats plus wheelchair, 3-year car and conversion warranties, 6 years' warranty for rust. Built-in ramp, electric inertia seat belts and chair lock. Cost £12,868 new, will accept £9,500 ono. Wife died, no longer needed. Tel: 01722 333010.

MERCEDES VITO 112 CDI
X reg, Nov 2000, with nominal delivery mileage. Metallic labrador blue, auto, air con', all electric, tinted glass, left hand drive. Was being converted when the owner sadly died. Right hand dashboard installed to provide wheelchair driving position with option of conventional left hand drive. Will sell at saving on cost of purchase and conversion so far carried out. For further information, contact Scotmobility, tel: 01592 770204, fax: 01592 770205.

RENAULT TRAFIC 1.7, 1992, K reg, petrol, 35k miles. MOT, taxed, mechanically good, some rust. Side door, wheelchair ramp. Takes 2 chairs. Offers over £2,000. Tel: 01784 455627 (Staines).

VOLKSWAGEN SHARAN Tdi, 1.9, 1997, P reg, Brotherwood conversion, metallic sky blue, 50k miles, fsh, remote control locking, air con, bodykit, alloys. Very sharp looking, takes 5 people (inc 1 wheelchair user). Sale due to change in circumstances. Including a set of free roof bars and top box. New price £27,500, now £13,500 ovno. Tel: 023 8027 0796.

RENAULT RN EXTRA, R reg, 9,500 miles, tax/MOT until October. 3 seats plus wheelchair, electric lowering suspension. Excellent condition. £7,500. Tel: 01438 213159 (Herts).

CITROEN SYNERGIE SX
1996, P reg. Front passenger Constables carchair conversion. Seats 4 plus luxury chair. MOT Sept' 2001, 39k miles, air con', ABS, fsh, 2 sun roofs. Exc' condition, 1 owner. £11,500. Tel: 020 8979 5327 (Middx).

REault EXTRA 1.2, K reg, blue, petrol, converted for rear wheelchair access with ramp plus driver's seat and 3 passenger seats. Tax and 12 months' MOT. Exc' runner. £2,000. Tel: 01268 550869.

VW MOTOR CARAVAN Swift Carrera Hitop, 2.5, auto, pas. As new, 11,300 miles. Remote control side lift, 1 year's MOT. £14,750 ono. Tel: 01953 453365.

• Wheelchairs/scooters

QUICKIE F55 POWERCHAIR, 2 years' old, regular service, max' forward speed 10kmh. Hardly used, cost over £4,000, sell for £1,985. Tel: 01738 631981 (Perth).

INVACARE G24 SR powerchair, electrically adjustable Recaro seat. Vgc, £950. Tel: 02392 550233 (Hants).

ALDERSLEY EXCEL SENIOR powerchair, carrying capacity up to 35 stone, spare wheels and various accessories. Excellent condition. Cost £4,100 new, will accept £1,500. Tel: 01234 840806 (Bedford).

SUNGIFT 500 4-WHEEL
scooter, bought April 2000, hardly used. Mirrors and crutch handles fitted. Cost £4,300, will accept £3,000 ono. Tel: 01544 327555.

SUNRISE STERLING 3-WHEEL scooter, easily dismantled for transport in a car. 4 year-sold, battery operated. £500 ono. Tel: 01544 327555 (Herefordshire).

BEC-SUNRISE SCOOTERS, 3-wheel: Sterling silver, £650. Super scooter, £350. Low prices for quick sale. Tel: 07941 612255 (Birmingham area).

EVEREST & JENNINGS electric wheelchair. £150 ono. Tel: 01453 825298.

ALVEMA CHILD'S WHEELCHAIR. Excellent condition. Groin and harness straps. Folds for transportation. Suit 6 years +. Cost £1,195, will sell for £350 ono. Tel: 0114 281 9413.

2 PORTABLE RAMPS, 6ft in length. Single track. £100 for the pair. Tel: 0121 707 2579 (Birmingham).

LIBERTY 2 ELECTRIC w/chair with charger. Fsh, £5,000 ono. Tel: 01268 550869.

ALVEMA 400, HIGH back model with vest harness, Used once. £800 ono. Tel/fax: 01389 721700.

• Combined

QUICKIE 2 WHEELCHAIR
with unused Powertec F16 power unit. Total cost new £3,400, now £1,250. Carmobility car passenger seat, swings out 180 degrees. Recaro seat. Excellent piece of equipment. Cost new £2,000, now £500. Tel: 01730 893486 (Hants).

ALL FOLLOWING, HARDLY used, vgc: electric safari car, 8mph, charger, offers. Powertec electric wheelchair, heavy duty, 1994, charger, £1,000. Stannah Stairlift, 13ft, adjustable, offers. Tel: 01799 550515 (evenings). Folding electric wheelchair, needs attention, free. Tel: 01293 862559.

MANUAL WHEELCHAIR WITH reclining backrest, £85 ono. Waterproof cape, leg cover and quilt cape, never used, £45. Pressure relief mattress (requires pump) and cushion £40. Tel: 020 7373 0913.

RENAULT TRAFIC, 1991, petrol, 67k miles. 1 or 2 wheelchair(s) plus 2 or 3 passengers. Winch and ramp. One owner, good condition. £2,750. Also, spa controller chair, £200. Tel: 01446 792088 or 024 7669 2878. (Cardiff area).

RAINBOW REHAB ALVMA pushchair. Cost £1,500, vgc, £550 ono. Physio equipment. Cost £400, £80 ono. Tel: 01189 621357.

• Household/family

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through-floor, electric, hydraulic vertical lift. Designed for w/chair users. As new. First installed Nov' 2000, can be installed by a builder. Cost £8,000, accept £5,000 ono. Buyer collects. Tel: 01544 327555 (Herefordshire).

MOLIFT TRACKING HOIST, as new. Free sling and all tracks and fittings included. £800. Tel: 01709 820644.

CHILTERN INVADEX WISPA
ceiling hoist, 2.4m track, all fittings plus 2 slings. 18 months' old, hardly used. £1,000. Tel: 020 8979 5327 (Middx).

WESSEX THROUGH-FLOOR lift. Will take one adult and wheelchair. Approx 6 years' old. Good condition. £1,000 ono. Tel: 01983 522579.

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• Wanted

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Please use this form if you are a private individual and want to place a classified advertisement (not Personal adverts). Write clearly in block capitals. Remember to allow a space between words. Use each space in the line even if you have to split words at the end.

Linage styles

EXAMPLE OF standard linage advert. Cost: £6 per line. Tick box below.

EXAMPLE OF semi-display linage advert. Cost: £6 per line plus £10. Tick box below.

EXAMPLE OF box linage advert. Cost: £6 per line plus £20. Tick box below.

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Choose an advert style from far right. Send this coupon with your name, address, daytime telephone number and a cheque for the total made payable to **Disability Now** to: 6 Market Road, London N7 9PW.

DN reserves the right to edit advertisements if necessary. Completion of this form does not guarantee inclusion in a particular issue. **Sorry no refunds.** DN is a non-profit making newspaper.

Continue on a separate sheet if necessary

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Nissan Vanette/Serena 2.3, diesel, 1997 P, Gowrings lowered floor, WAV conversion £8,995
Ford Courier 1.8, diesel, 1997 R, 18k miles, white. New lowered floor, WAV conversion £10,495
Renault Extra 1.9, diesel, 1995 M, white. Lowering suspension, lowered floor and raised roof £5,995
VW Transporter SWB 1.9, turbo diesel, 1995 M, green. 4 passengers, driver and wheelchair, WAV conversion £9,750
Austin/Rover Montego 2.0, LXI, 1994 M, estate, auto, only 55k miles, very clean. Fitted with hand controls. £1,750
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1999 V Berlingo Chairman 1.8, air con, lowering, 30k miles £10,995
1998 S Ford Courier, auto, pas, 10k miles £9,995
1997 R Ford Courier, 1 owner, pas, 9k miles £8,750
1997 P Seat Alhambra, petrol, 5 seats + wheelchair £11,995
1996 N Ford Courier Poyntings, auto, pas, 1 owner, 5k miles £8,250
1995 M Nissan Prairie Brotherwood, 1 owner, 70k miles £10,995
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For an informal discussion about this post please contact
Pauline Gill, Democratic Service Manager on 01202 633043 or
Michael Bone, Principal Democratic Support Officer on 01202 633017.
Closing date for this post is: 5 July 2001
Interviews to be held: 23 July 2001
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Minimum requirements: Quark Xpress, MS Word and a year's experience. Photoshop skills would be a plus.
For an application form, contact Dan Batten,
tel: 020 7619 7323, fax: 020 7619 7331,
email: editor@disabilitynow.org.uk
Closing date: 19 July.
Disability Now is published by Scope in London. Disabled applicants welcome.

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Interested? Then please contact Pat Butterell on 01926 736322 for an application form and further details.
Closing date: 11 July.
www.warwickshire.gov.uk
Warwickshire County Council

DabB Disability Action in the Borough of Barnet DEVELOPMENT WORKER

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We now have funding from National Lottery Charities Board to employ a Development Worker for two years.

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Disabled people are encouraged to apply for this post.

Closing date: Friday 20th July 2001.

For an application form, please contact:

Aspal Dhani
Director
DabB
54 High Road
North Finchley
London N12 9RX
Telephone 020 8446 6935
Textphone: 020 8343 7632,
Email: disability@dabb.org.uk

QUEEN ELIZABETH'S FOUNDATION RESOURCE CENTRE

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For further information, please contact:

Deborah Warriner at Queen Elizabeth's Foundation,
Leatherhead Court, Leatherhead, Surrey KT22 0BN
or telephone 01372 841105

E-mail: deborah.warriner@qefd.org

Website: www.qefd.org Closing date: Friday, 6th July 2001.

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MIDDLESEX
UNIVERSITY

You will be working in the Middlesex Disability Support Unit (The Able Centre), on the University's Enfield campus, which includes the Sign Language Bureau and the Able Access Centre. It provides support to students from admission, assessment for DSA, through study, to graduation. You will be a key member of a team providing high quality support to disabled students in a university with a leading reputation for promoting access of disabled students to higher education.

You should:

- be computer literate and have a degree or equivalent experience
- have experience of supporting disabled students in Secondary or Further education and knowledge of provision for disabled students
- be aware of the technologies available for the support of disabled students.

For an informal discussion about this post please contact Roger Harris on 020 8411 5487.

To apply please email, telephone or write requesting an application form and further details, quoting the job reference DEN28D. Email recruit1@mdx.ac.uk Telephone 020 8411 6110. Recruitment Office, Middlesex University, Bounds Green Road, London N11 2NQ. Closing date 27 July 2001.



Middlesex University is working
towards equality of opportunity
Job share applications
will be considered

POSITIVE ABOUT
DISABLED PEOPLE

Design Options for a Versatile Environment

A housing and information service managed by disabled people, for disabled people, require:

Liaison Officer

to support disabled people with their housing requirements and promote the service serving the county of Hampshire. Based in Portsmouth. Salary: £16,500pa, 37 hours pw.

Job description and application form from Trevor Davis, DOVE

85 Northern Road

Cosham

Portsmouth PO6 3AH

tel/fax: 023 9278 7788,

e-mail: admin@d-o-v-e.org

Closing date: 5pm 31 July 2001.



Design Options for a
Versatile Environment

CONDITIONS

DN maintains the right to amend or withdraw adverts without prior notice. All adverts must comply with the British Code of Advertising Practice.

Telephone numbers and addresses will not be placed in personal adverts, for confidentiality. Instead, Box Numbers will be provided. Likewise, telephone numbers and addresses will not be given out over the telephone if requested.

Box Numbers can be requested for non-personal adverts. However, it may limit the response to it. If you want to advertise documents, goods or services contact Richard Gresham (tel: 020 7619 7336) or Patrick Durham-Matthews (tel: 020 7619 7320), fax: 020 7619 7331.

Lineage adverts can only be used by private individuals. All commercial enquiries must be addressed to Richard Gresham.

DN cannot except responsibility for loss or damage of adverts or letters during forwarding. It is the responsibility of the advertiser to check the content of their advert, and to ensure any abbreviations cannot be misunderstood.

Joint Mobility Unit

a service provided by RNIB and GDBA

Senior Policy Adviser

£25,215 - £31,395 inc LW

London

As Senior Policy Adviser, you will be involved in preparing policy statements, responses to consultations from external organisations, including Government, and seeking to build networks and alliances to further our policy goals. Central to your role will be providing the Secretariat to the Joint Committee on Mobility for Blind and Partially Sighted People. You will also manage our team members responsible for publishing, information provision and marketing.

Educated to degree level or equivalent, you will have at least four years' experience of policy development as it affects disabled people and/or transport and the built environment.

You will possess strong analytical, communication and interpersonal skills and be able to work in a pressurised environment.

For an application pack please telephone 020 7388 2370 (24 hour answerphone) or write to the Personnel Department, RNIB, 224 Great Portland Street, London W1W 5AA. Please quote reference 1997.

Closing date 13 July 2001.

RNIB is committed to equal opportunities

Royal National Institute for the Blind

Registered charity number 226227



The Guide Dogs
for the Blind Association



RNIB

Ready for the biggest job in bus transport?

Performance Director

Transport for London is the new authority tasked with implementing the Mayor's bold vision for integrated transport in the capital. Now you can play a decisive role in the success of this mission, driving the strategic planning, procurement and performance management of London's bus services which are entering a period of unprecedented growth.

Sustained performance improvement will be the central theme of this role, as you create and implement far-reaching initiatives across our bus operation, including performance and contract management, tendering and bus service planning. Key to this will be negotiation and partnership with operators in the development and delivery of world class bus services that are safe, cost efficient and of benefit to the whole community. You must demonstrate commitment and enthusiasm to promote the principle of equality in employment and service delivery.

As a member of the London Buses Board you will need an exceptional track record in senior transport management. A firm technical grasp of bus operation and planning will also be vital, as will the leadership ability, vision and commercial flair required to achieve our ambitious objectives.

In return we can offer you an excellent salary and attractive benefits. To apply, please telephone 020 7941 4436 or email hr@transportforlondon.gov.uk for an application pack quoting reference TFL99DN. For more information about TFL please see our website www.transportforlondon.gov.uk. Closing date: 6 July 2001.

Transport for London values the diversity which exists in our city and aspires to this being reflected in our workforce.



Surface Transport

Transport for London

DEADLINES

August classified deadlines:
 Booking deadline:13 July
 Copy deadline: 17 July

WEBSITE

To get your ad on our website, call Richard Gresham, details on page3

Holidays

ALGARVE - PORTUGAL

Lots of villas, farmhouses, bungalows, hotels, B&B, car hire with hand controls, adapted vans and plenty to see and do. Contact: David Player Tel: 00 351 289 393636 Fax: 00 351 289 397448 E-mail: dave@player.pt

www.player.pt

Blagdon Farm Country Holidays

Devon/Cornwall border

Superb, south-facing, wheelchair accessible luxury bungalows overlooking lake and set within 38 acres of glorious countryside. Many on-site facilities including indoor heated pool. Take-away meals delivered and equipment loan available. Tourist Board Highly Commended.

For colour brochure please contact: Pauline and Tony Blight, Blagdon Farm, Ashwater, Beaworthy, Devon EX21 5DF. Phone: 01409 211509. Fax 01409 211510.

WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE HOLIDAY COTTAGE IN RURAL FRANCE

Charming cottage in Dordogne region available for rent. Reasonable rates. If you are looking for peace and quiet, warm weather, good food and wine, this is the place for you. Book now for 2001. Call or fax Ed Passant on 0208 885 4971 or e-mail: ed.passant@mail.com

Brittany Cottage

to let. Fully adapted for wheelchair use. Good access to beaches. Sleeps up to 6. Details **C. Hodgson.** Tel (01924) 499220.

GRANGE COURT HOLIDAY VILLAGE:

Park with "good" status, Goodrington Sands, Devon. Excellent site facilities within short walk. with indoor/ outdoor pools, restaurant, bar, take-away. Fully equipped, 2 bedroom, fully wheelchair accessible mobile home. Sleeps 4-6, well appointed. Free club membership. (Purchased with funds from the National Lottery).

MILDENREATH HOLIDAY VILLAGE: Excellent seaside site with good facilities, just outside Looe in Cornwall. Restaurant, clubhouse, indoor pool. Fully equipped and wheelchair accessible 2 bedroom chalet accommodation. Sleeps 6 - well furnished and comfortable. Free club membership.

Details: Mr P Cash, tel: (01425) 672055 Bournemouth Spina Bifida Association. Registered Charity No. 261914.

ODDICOMBE HALL HOTEL

Provides an excellent holiday for the disabled person and their family. We have full disabled facilities and are able to cater for organised parties. All wheelchair accessible rooms open on to a private garden with conservatory and have breathtaking sea views. Private car park with unloading at entrance to the hotel. Open all year.

Why not escape and relax at delightful Babbacombe, Torquay? Category 2. Special 3-4 day breaks Nov-April. Discount for group bookings. Tel: (01803) 313457.

PENROSE BURDEN NORTH CORNWALL

"Holiday Care Award Winners"

Holiday Cottages designed for wheelchair users and their families. Rural setting with superb views. Dogs welcome. Wood burning stoves and daily meal service.

Please ring or write for colour brochure. R&N Hall, Penrose Burden, St Breward, Bodmin, Cornwall PL30 4LZ. Telephone Bodmin (01208) 850277 or 850617

ORLANDO, FLORIDA

HOME WITH A HEART FOR DISABLED TRAVELLERS!

SPACIOUS, LUXURY, ADAPTED BUNGALOW SITUATED ON GOLF COURSE. 3 DOUBLE BEDROOMS. 2 BATHROOMS (MANGAR BATHLIFT INSTALLED). CABLE TV. FREE LOCAL TELEPHONE CALLS. FREE COUNTRY CLUB MEMBERSHIP. 24 HR 'ON CALL' MANAGEMENT COMPANY. 15 mins ORLANDO AIRPORT. 20 mins DISNEY. PARAPLEGIC OWNER.

SUE FISHER, 5 PARK LANE, BROUGHTON PARK, SALFORD M7 4HT. TEL/FAX: 0161 792 3029

BOOK NOW TO AVOID DISAPPOINTMENT

• Recruitment (on pages 42 to 45)

Department for

Education and Skills

TEMPORARY WITH A

VIEW TO PERMANENCY

Grade

Administrative officer/Assistant (temporary with a view to permanency)

Vacancies

The DfES has vacancies at Administrative Officer (AO) and Administrative Assistant (AA) level to work at their Head Office in Sheffield and are running a recruitment exercise to fill vacancies. There will be a limited number of permanent posts, the majority of vacancies are temporary with a view to permanency.

Who Can Apply

This is an external recruitment where anyone can apply including all staff within the Department and those on temporary (casual) and New Deal appointments. People with a current promotion/progression penalty are not eligible to apply.

Salary

AO £11,850 - £13,706 p.a. AA £9,906 - £11,573 p.a.

Annual Leave

25 days a year plus bank holidays and privilege days.

The jobs

- There are many different and varied administrative jobs in DfES. All of the vacancies will involve individuals using a range of standard computer packages, and frequent use of electronic communications (e-mail). Some examples of the work you could be doing are:
- Answering written and telephone enquires from members of the public and businesses making sure that your response is accurate, clear, well written and typed correctly;
- Working as part of a team, helping your colleagues and suggesting ways that the team can better work together and continually improve performance;
- Working with a wide range of people across DfES, dealing with a variety of different subjects to gather essential information to respond to enquiries.

You must be able to demonstrate that you can meet tight deadlines consistently whilst working under pressure; have good communication and interpersonal skills and feel comfortable speaking to people at all levels; are confident to be able to give clear explanations/ instructions; and have a willingness to work as part of a team.

You will be required to provide evidence of your suitability in three areas, which we call competencies. These competencies are Working Together; Communicating Effectively; and Achieving and Improving.

The selection process

There are two stages in the process. The first stage will be the completion of an application form, where you will be asked to give specific examples of how you have demonstrated the required competencies. The second; a competence based interview.

Application forms are available from the Recruitment Team on telephone **01928 794704** or e-mail **recruitment.team@dfes.gsi.gov.uk**

In addition we are hosting a series of informal job preparation events across the Community Centres in Sheffield. Please come along and meet us (you don't need to book). These workshops will provide you with guidance on how best to complete our application forms. We'll also give you useful information and advice on what to expect if you are invited to interview.

Events will be held at:

Saddaca, 48 Wicker, Sheffield on Tues 26th June and Wed 4th July. The sessions will start at 10am, 12 noon and 2pm on both dates.

ADCE (Attercliffe and Darnall Community Enterprise), 544 Attercliffe Road, Sheffield on Fri 29th June and Thurs 5th July. The sessions will start at 10am, 12 noon and 2pm on both dates.



Pakistan Muslim Centre, Woodbourn Road, Sheffield on Thurs 28th June and Tues 3rd July. The sessions will start at 2pm on both dates.

The closing date for requesting applications is 5th July 2001 and all completed forms must be returned to the Recruitment Team by the closing date of **11th July 2001.**

The DfES is committed to recruiting a more diverse workforce that reflects the people we serve. We strongly believe in an organisation which values people, performs to a high standard, and is professional.

We are committed to making reasonable adjustments for people with disabilities and using a variety of flexible working arrangements to enable all staff to balance their work and their private lives. We recruit people based on merit and open and fair competition. All applicants are treated equally regardless of age, disability and ethnic origin, gender, marital status, religion or sexual orientation.

As we are currently under represented within the Sheffield site; we particularly welcome applications from ethnic minority communities and people with disabilities

INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

POSITIVE ABOUT
DISABLED PEOPLE

• Holidays

Great self-catering in

South West Wales


Sŵn-y-Gwynt Cottage

Sleeps 4, fabulous views, flawless luxury. TV, linen, power all included.

Tel: 01267 237261

E-mail: antony.griew@virgin.net

Accessibility Grade 1



4 Star self catering cottages on animal park in North Wales. Fully wheelchair accessible with all services for disabled people, 2 miles from the beach. Three quarters hour drive from Snowdonia National Park. 01407 711433.

Norfolk, Nar Valley

Holiday Cottages

3 self-catering, all wheelchair accessible, 1 with wheel-in shower room, 2 with airbaths. Mostly en-suite. On working farm - peaceful location, central for beaches and tourist attractions. Indoor heated swimming pool.

More details and prices, contact: Rosemary on 01760 338797.

• Property for sale

Dibden Purlieu

on the edge of the New Forest

Detached 3-bed architect-designed, purpose-built for wheelchair and able-bodied persons. Wheelchair lift offering independence on 2 floors. Entrance hall, cloakrooms, lounge, kitchen/breakfast room, bathroom, hobbies room, sauna, garage. Double glazed windows, gch. Contact Pearsons Estate Agents on

023 8084 4131

Disability**NOW** July 2001

Look at the difference

If you're looking for an employer that really values you as an individual, congratulations - you've found one. At Barking and Dagenham, we're positive about diversity, because we know our mixture of cultures, ages, levels of ability and gender actually strengthens our team. And by reflecting the makeup of our community, we'll be better able to provide sensitive, relevant and accessible services to meet its needs.

This year we won three Charter Marks and received commendations at the Local Government Chronicle Awards. Our Social Services have improved dramatically and we

are developing innovative partnerships with the local Health Authority. Our schools are amongst the fastest improving in the Country. We are at the heart of the Thames Gateway regeneration project. These achievements are just the beginning, as we continue to strive for excellence, working with our community and strategic partners.

We're regularly recruiting across the board. To find out more about us and the roles we have on offer, visit us at www.barking-dagenham.gov.uk. Opportunities to join us are also advertised in local, national or trade press, as well as at local job centres.



CO-ORDINATOR Salary £22,971 (SCP 34)

Disability Action Cheltenham is a highly effective independent organisation run by and for disabled people in the Cheltenham area, and is a full member of BCODP. The current postholder has been appointed as the new Chief Executive of BCODP, and the new postholder will have the opportunity to take the organisation forward to the next stage of our development.

The successful candidate will be a disabled person and able to work outside normal office hours. Experience of managing people and projects is necessary.

Phone 01242 237292 or e-mail disabilityactioncheltenham@hotmail.com for an application pack.

Closing date for applications is 16th July.
Interview date 23rd July.

DAC is committed to equal opportunities.



Senior Disability Access Auditor/Consultant Salary £20-£22k + car, depending on experience

AIMS Group are a multi-million pound health and safety consultancy organisation providing services to a large number of Blue Chip clients across the UK.

Due to the expansion of our Disability Consultancy activities, we have vacancies for experienced Disability Access Auditors/Consultants.

These roles will require considerable travel throughout the UK allied with our customers requirements.

An excellent communicator, you must also have good analytical and report writing skills. Preference will be given to those candidates with previous disability access and health and safety qualifications and experience.

AIMS Group is an equal opportunities employer. Please contact Mrs Jodie Peach, AIMS Ltd, Towcester Road, Greens Norton, Towcester, Northants NN12 8BL, tel: 01327 358085 for an application form.

Closing date for completed application forms is 20 July 2001.

Disability Rights Commission

Make the first move!

Transport Policy Development Manager

London

Up to £30,921

Ref: 25029.

Dedicated to eliminating discrimination and achieving equality for all, we are the Disability Rights Commission (DRC). Totally committed to delivering a high quality service that communicates our aim of full participation in all areas of society for disabled people, we are looking for an experienced individual to share our vision.

Leading and developing transport projects both in and around London, you'll:

- advise on the implications of transport policy and legislative developments;
- implement major policy initiatives within the area;
- represent the DRC on external bodies and advise the Commission on the effectiveness of DDA on transport, recommending areas for development.

This high profile role, demands four years' experience in policy analysis, policy making and development, at least two of which will be at a senior level. A confident communicator, you'll possess the ability to interact with people and excellent powers of persuasion and negotiation. Your clear understanding of current transport issues, especially relating to the disabled, will enable you to effectively achieve positive results. This is a secondment for up to two years.

So, make the first move and please apply by calling 0800 068 4912.

Alternative methods of application are available to suit your needs (large print, braille, audio, electronic etc) - The HR team will liaise with you directly should you require alternative formats. For minicom applications please call 0207 406 5790. You can request an application form on-line at: www.drc.co.uk or e-mail your details to: drc@tmpw.co.uk
Closing date: 15th July 2001.

The LGA is the national voice for 500 local authorities in England and Wales.

Part-Time Receptionist/Telephonist

Salary - £14,748 to £19,236 (£10,534 to £13,740 pro rata)

Hours of work - Monday to Friday, 8.30am-1.30pm

The LGA is the leading lobbying organisation for local government and needs a professional Receptionist/Telephonist to contribute to the success of the Facilities Management team. You would be responsible for providing a professional, courteous service to personal callers, operate the switchboard and as part of the Facilities Management team, provide other administrative, customer care and information support as required.

You will need to be an enthusiastic, customer-focused team player with Reception and/or Switchboard experience. Excellent communications skills, the ability to work unsupervised, good IT skills and a flexible approach to work are also essential.

For an application form and job pack, download from <http://www.lga.gov.uk/lga/jobsonline/index.htm>, telephone 020 7664 3070 (24 hour answering service) or email personnel@lga.gov.uk

Closing date: 12pm Wednesday 11th July 2001.

Interview date: Monday 16th July 2001.

The LGA has a positive approach to equalities and welcomes applications from all sectors of the community.



Local Government Association

• Services

Sales and services to all makes of wheelchair taillifts and elevators, Loler 98 servicing, repairs all on site, mobile engineers, nationwide coverage, 24 hours breakdown service, main dealer for Ricon UK and Concorde elevators.
Tel: 0161 281 3264

Autotrim Services Limited

Autotrim specialise in the conversion of LCVs to minibuses and wheelchair accessible vehicles. Building to customer's requirements, we have over 15 years experience of providing vehicles for the healthcare sector and our satisfied clients include a number of NHS Trusts, Nursing Homes and Care Group Operators.

For more information please call
01484 666333

Payday Services Limited

Payday Services provides payroll services for voluntary and non-profit making organisations, home carers, charities (no VAT) and SMEs.

We do everything necessary for you to pay your employees correctly.



The Studio, Benefield Road, Brigstock NN14 3ES
Tel: 01536 373111 Fax: 01536 373123
Web: www.paydayservices.co.uk

Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle Converters Association

Over the past two years the six companies who have been supplying Motability with wheelchair accessible vehicles (WAVS) have come together with a view to producing a code of practice for the industry.



The Vehicle Certification Agency (VCA) and Vehicle inspectorate (VI) who are regulatory agencies of the Department of Environment and Transport in the Regions (DETR) have welcomed the formation of the Association. Motability and MFL have also applauded the setting down on paper of a code which ensures a standard of both product and service for the customer.

Although a *new born* association the following founder members, in alphabetical order, **Brotherwood, Constables, Gowrings, Lewis Reed, Universal** and **Widnes** have between them considerable experience in converting and providing vehicles which transport the individual passenger when travelling seated in their own wheelchair. We have set minimum standards to ensure that future customers will have full confidence in a converter who has achieved the necessary criteria to join this Association.

The method of conversion will always remain a speciality of individual members to ensure each customer has freedom of choice and that healthy competition exists between converters.

A sign bearing the WAVCA logo will appear on each of the founder members' stands following the launch of the Association at this year's Mobility Roadshow.



Take part in Baywatch!

No sadly, we can't offer you a week on the beach with David Hasslehoff, but this is much more important.

Are you tired of turning up at the supermarket only to find that the bays for disabled motorists are blocked by vehicles that should not be there?

One of the aims of the Baywatch campaign is to gather information from around the British Isles on just how effective supermarkets commitment to eliminating car parking abuse really is.

Please help us by taking a few minutes to complete this form*, telling us about disabled car parking facilities in your local area. Send it to the address on page 3.

(*also on the DN website at www.disabilitynow.org.uk)

Are you disabled? Yes ☐ No ☐

Which supermarket do you most frequently use?

Asda ☐ Sainsbury's ☐ Tesco ☐ Safeway ☐ Other ☐ please specify

Have you ever seen the designated parking bays at your supermarket being misused? Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, how often? 1-5 times ☐ 6-10 times ☐ over 10 times ☐

Did you report this misuse to the supermarket? Yes ☐ No ☐

How did the supermarket react? Took action ☐ Took no action ☐

Have you seen evidence of your supermarket "policing" their designated parking bays? Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, what type of action do they take? Speaking bays ☐ Verbal warning to abusers ☐

Warning stickers ☐ Tannoy announcements ☐

Car park attendants ☐ Other, please specify ☐

Which supermarket do you feel has the best facilities for disabled drivers?

Asda ☐ Sainsbury's ☐ Tesco ☐ Safeway ☐ Other ☐ please specify

Do you have ideas for improvements that supermarkets could undertake?

Name:

Address:

Tel:

Disability**NOW**



White knuckle thrills



Summer is here with school holidays on the horizon, so why not try and grab yourselves some tickets to three of the UK's most-loved amusement parks?

Whether you like *terrafirma* or just plain terror, you'll find something to entertain all the family at Drayton Manor Park, Thorpe Park and Alton Towers. What is more, all three came out on top in our survey of accessible amusement parks (July 2000).

We have four family tickets (two adults and two children) worth

£47 each, to Staffordshire's Drayton Manor Park. There are over 100 rides and



attractions, plus a zoo, farm museums and nature trail. For a real adrenaline kick, don't miss the awesome Apocalypse (below, being ridden by pop band B*Witched), which offers its passengers an 80kph drop at the mercy of gravity. Other attractions include Stormforce 10, Europe's fastest wet knuckle ride.

Perhaps Thorpe Park, Surrey, is closer to home? If so, we have



five family tickets, worth £59, to win. The new Detonator ride (right) will winch you a nail-biting 100ft into the air and then fire you back to earth at a belting 75kph. Cool down on the Tidal Wave (left), Europe's highest water drop ride; it'll plunge you 85ft through water! For something a little more sedate, try Pirates-4D experience or Neptune's Beach.

Set in 500 acres, Alton Towers, Staffordshire, is split into areas ranging from The Towers, where you will find Hex – the legend of the Towers – to the gardens with conservation and picnic areas. Signature rides include the ever-popular Oblivion, Nemesis and Blackhole. DN has three family tickets, worth £68, up for grabs.

To enter, complete the form below, stating your preference if you have one.

DN advises readers to

contact venues in advance to ensure that their access needs can be met.

Drayton Manor, tel: 01827 287979

Thorpe Park, tel: 0870 444 4466

Alton Towers, tel: 0870 520 4060



Special offer!

Get some handy support

Here's your chance to get free postage and packing when you buy the Wristeasy™ wrist brace through the Youreable.com website.

Ideal for anyone with arthritis, RSI or carpal tunnel, the wrist is supported by a heat-mouldable inner splint that can be shaped for a user's optimum comfort. The brace holds your wrist in the best healing position.

Attractive and discreet, the Wristeasy comes in a range of colours and sizes. Its zip fastener won't damage or snag clothes. All this for just £23.50 including VAT or £20 excluding VAT.

youreable.com



"Comfortable, stylish, discreet ... the Wristeasy has transformed my life. I hope it does the same for you"
Henrietta Wallace

To take advantage of this great offer, visit www.youreable.com, or complete the form below.

TO ENTER

Tick your chosen competition circle(s) below, add your details, and send FOR FREE to Disability Now, Freepost WD4323, London N7 9BR, or you can fax it on 020 7619 7331, or e-mail the details to editor@disabilitynow.org.uk

☐ Amusement parks: (preference)

☐

☐

☐

☐

TERMS & CONDITIONS

• Closing date for offers: 31.7.2001 • Entrants must be over 18 • No proof of purchase required • UK entrants only • No cash alternatives • Winners notified by post • Editor's decision is final • Special offers not open to DN staff or associates • Winners may be announced in DN • This is a joint partnership with The Tussaud's Group, Drayton Manor Park Ltd and Youreable.com Ltd, and we may use your name and address for further marketing purposes. Please tick the box if you do not wish your name and address to be included ☐

Send completed form and payment details to Youreable Wristeasy Offer, PO Box 135, Wetherby, West Yorkshire LS23 7JJ.

For multiple orders of different colours or sizes, please duplicate this form.

Colour: black ☐ beige ☐ blue ☐ white ☐

Wrist size (around smallest point): cm Palm width (around knuckles) cm

No. of left hand: and right hand: Total: I am VAT exempt ☐ (see below)

I wish to pay by cheque made payable to Wristeasy ☐

I wish to pay by: Mastercard ☐ Visa ☐ Switch/Solo ☐ American Express ☐

Card No.: Issue No.: Expiry date:

Signature:

Name:

Address:

Postcode:

E-mail: Date of birth:

£23.50 inc. VAT, £20 exc. VAT. Those eligible should also submit a signed VAT exempt declaration.

Delivery within 28 working days. Full refund if not satisfied within 7 days.

TERMS & CONDITIONS

• Entrants must be over 18 • Entrants must be a UK resident • This offer is valid until 31 July 2001 • Youreable is not responsible for the delivery or availability of the product • Products supplied by Wristeasy • Wristeasy accepts no responsibility for the design of the product • Cut out coupon is valid for redemption against the Wristeasy brace only • Value of cut out coupon is 0.0000000001p • Customers eligible for VAT exempt prices should return the form and payment along with a signed VAT exemption declaration • Entrants must not work for Youreable, Disability Now or Wristeasy • English law will govern the terms of this offer, within the exclusive jurisdiction of the English Courts • By ordering a product, applicants agree to be bound by the rules of this offer • The promoter is Youreable.com Ltd, 15th Floor, St Alphage House, 2 Fore Street, London EC2Y 5DA.

DisabilityNow

£1.80 July 2001

The campaigning newspaper that puts you in the picture

Love hurts

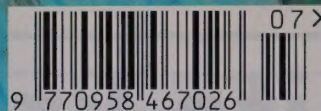
Carers left to take the strain

Green light

Aspel backs parking campaign

Summer fun

Trips for all the family



Jobs

p42-45 and on our website: www.disabilitynow.org.uk

Mercedes from £16,495



VW from £13,545

At Lewis Reed, we don't simply build quality wheelchair accessible vehicles, we tailor them to your most specific needs. With easy access features. Superb visibility. Superior comfort. And exceptional levels of safety.

Through our flexible deposit plan and ownership schemes, we can also make it easier for you to choose the vehicle that best suits you. Whilst our friendly after-sales service is never more than a phone call away.

So if you're looking for a vehicle built around real customer service, send for a brochure today. And discover for yourself how nothing less than a Lewis Reed Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle will do.



*"I wanted a conversion by a firm who really understand disabled needs...
...nothing else would do"*



✓ The widest choice of quality marques	✓ Flexible ownership schemes
✓ Luxury interiors as standard	✓ Prices from just £12,500
✓ The highest levels of customer service	✓ MOTABILITY help & advice
✓ Independently safety tested	✓ Lifetime customer service - while you own the vehicle
✓ Superb conversions by fully trained experts	✓ Never more than a phone call away
✓ "No obligation" test drives from your front door	✓ Quality used conversions always in stock



**Wheelchair
Accessible
Vehicles**

because nothing else will do

Call for your free brochure today on: 0151 650 2334

Lairdside Technology Park, Birkenhead, CH41 9HS